

# **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**

## **Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report**



*Patrol, Protect, Preserve*

**November 30, 2018 through December 13, 2018**

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

### **NORTHWEST REGION**

#### **CASES**

##### **BAY COUNTY**

Officer Palmer and Reserve Officer Chesser were conducting patrols along Deer Point Dam when they saw an individual throwing a cast net on the freshwater side of the dam. The officers conducted a resource inspection of the individual and found him to be in possession of 64 bream, eight black bass and seven speckled perch. The violations of taking game fish by illegal method, over the bag limit of pan fish, over the bag limit of black bass and no freshwater fishing license were addressed. All the fish were returned to the water alive.

##### **CALHOUN COUNTY**

Officer Hayes was conducting surveillance targeting night hunting when he saw a truck driving slowly down a rural road with a light bar on top of the truck illuminating both sides of the road. Officer Hayes followed the truck for approximately two miles. When it stopped, the driver stepped out and shot a deer standing on the shoulder of the road. The suspect was cited for night hunting and road hunting.

Officer Baber was working night hunting when he saw a vehicle driving slowly down a road and displaying a light on a farm field. Moments later, he heard a rifle shot. The vehicle continued traveling toward Officer Baber's location and the light continued to be displayed from the passenger's window. Once the vehicle reached Officer Baber's location, he initiated a traffic stop. As he approached the vehicle, he saw a freshly killed

10-point buck in the back of the truck. The driver admitted to shooting the deer a few minutes before. Both suspects were cited for taking deer at night with gun and light and road hunting. A .243 rifle, spotlight and deer were seized as evidence.

## FEDERAL WATERS

Officers Cushing and Land conducted federal fisheries patrols aboard the "NW FINCAT". Several federal violations were discovered, and appropriate action was taken. They saw a commercial fishing vessel actively engaged in fishing. Upon approach, one of the deckhands dumped unknown contents out of a container into the water. During the inspection, Officer Land discovered several undersized red snapper in whole condition as well as red snapper fillets on a hook and leader. Appropriate citations were issued.

Officer Land conducted a marine fisheries inspection of a recreational vessel with two persons onboard. Before boarding the vessel, Officer Land asked them if they had any fish onboard. The owner of the vessel stated that they had a bar jack. In addition to the bar jack, Officer Land discovered four red snapper. Red snapper season is currently closed to recreational harvest. Appropriate citations were issued.

Officer Cushing saw a sportfishing vessel a few miles away. As they got closer to the vessel, it changed direction and increased speed. Officer Land boarded the commercial sportfishing vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection. As Officer Cushing maneuvered away, he saw several active seagulls approximately 250 yards away in the wake wash. Officer Cushing went to the location and discovered 30 gray triggerfish floating. Officer Land discovered several additional gray triggerfish on the deck as well as bagged fillets of reef fish and red snapper cut for bait. Gray triggerfish season is closed to recreational and commercial harvest. The captain of the vessel took ownership of the violations and was cited appropriately.

## FRANKLIN COUNTY

Officer Pino was conducting resource inspections on the Eastpoint Fishing Pier. He encountered two subjects actively fishing and inspected their coolers. Officer Pino discovered six undersized spotted sea trout and three undersized red drum. The owner was cited, and the fish were returned to the water alive.

Officers Hughes and Hofheinz were traveling on Highway 98 when they saw subjects net fishing next to the highway. After watching the subjects fish, they determined they were illegally fishing three nets from one vessel. They contacted the subjects and issued the appropriate citations.

## JACKSON COUNTY

Officer Forehand was flagged down by a motorist who stated she had just left a nearby store where a motorcycle pulled in and had a minor accident. She believed the operator

was impaired. Officer Forehand responded to the store as the motorcycle was attempting to pull away. A traffic stop was conducted and during the stop Officer Forehand detected signs of impairment. After conducting field sobriety tasks, the suspect was placed under arrest and transported to the Jackson County Jail. A breath sample was provided which registered .210 blood alcohol content and .220 blood alcohol content.

Officers Little and Scott received a complaint from a landowner regarding a shot he heard the night before on the roadway near his residence. The landowner went to the area where he heard the shot and found a deer that had been shot. Moments later, a truck drove slowly by, but when the driver saw the landowner, the truck took off at a high rate of speed. The landowner got the tag number and provided it to the officers. The officers located the two suspects, one of whom admitted to shooting the deer and the other suspect admitted to holding the light. Both suspects were cited for taking deer at night with gun and light and road hunting. A 30-06 rifle and spotlight were seized as evidence.

Officers Forehand and Little received a complaint from a landowner regarding three suspects who came onto his property and shot at some hogs. The landowner provided a tag number from the suspects' truck. The officers located and interviewed all three suspects who admitted to going onto the landowner's property. At the landowner's request, all three suspects were cited for simple trespass.

## WASHINGTON COUNTY

Officers Gore and Parrish were persistent in checking a baited location on the Choctawhatchee Wildlife Management Area and located a subject hunting over the baited area during closed season. The subject admitted to clearing a road and food plot on the management area and destroying natural vegetation. He had corn, a mineral block, was not wearing the required subject orange, and was in a safety zone closed to hunting. He was cited accordingly.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

## JEFFERSON COUNTY

Officer Wilcox and Lieutenant Wass de Czege taught the law portion of the hunter safety course at the Jefferson Correctional Institute. The course was the practical portion of the internet course version. Jeff Schumacher from FWC's Hunting and Game Management Division hosted the event which was attended by approximately 35 people.

## LEON COUNTY

Officer Wilcox and Lieutenant Wass de Czege attended the Mobility Impaired Pre-Hunt Meeting for the new Plank Road WMA. Approximately 15 people along with their guests

and assistants were in attendance. The officers answered questions and offered clarification on the rules and regulations for the new WMA.

## **NORTH CENTRAL REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **DUVAL COUNTY**

Officers Lemaster and Stuhr were on patrol of private property off Heckscher Drive in Jacksonville when they came across two subjects trespassing on the property, riding dirt bikes. They also saw a vehicle occupied by three subjects who were also trespassing. The two riding dirt bikes were issued written warnings for trespassing. The occupants of the vehicle were issued notices to appear for possession of cannabis and a written warning for a traffic offense.

Environmental Investigator Terrones located an 880-cubic foot pile of wood debris that had been illegally dumped in an empty lot in Jacksonville. Items in the debris revealed that a landscaping company had hired someone to haul away the debris and paid him an additional dump fee to take the items to a landfill. The suspect was interviewed and admitted to the dumping. He agreed to properly dispose of the debris at the landfill and provide disposal receipts. The suspect was charged accordingly.

#### **ALACHUA COUNTY**

Officer Reith was patrolling private property during antlerless deer weekend when he came across three vehicles parked in front of a gate which leads to property that has been known for deer hunting. While waiting at the vehicles for the subjects to return, Officer Reith heard two gunshots 10 minutes apart coming from within the property. After approximately 20 minutes, Officer Reith saw two individuals dressed in camo carrying rifles, walking from inside the property. Officer Reith contacted the subjects and asked them if they had killed anything. One subject replied he had killed a doe and the other said he did not kill anything. Officer Reith asked for their hunting licenses. One subject produced a valid one and the other had his license privileges suspended/revoked. Officer Reith asked if there were more people hunting and they replied yes, they were just coming to get a truck to retrieve the deer. Officer Reith followed the subjects onto the property to check the other deer and saw three more subjects all holding rifles dressed in camo standing in front of two dead does and 1 dead antlered buck. After a short interview, Officer Reith was able to determine that one subject had shot the two does and the another had shot one buck. After measuring the buck's antlers, it did not meet the antler regulations for that DMU. Officer Reith issued criminal citations for hunting/fishing when license privileges are suspended/revoked, harvest of illegal antlered buck, over the bag limit of doe deer during antlerless weekend and an infraction for no deer permit. All illegal deer were seized.

Officers Troiano and Stanley were working trespass issues on Rayonier property in the Montechoa area. After watching several gates late one evening, they heard someone yelling in the woods. The two officers located several people who had been mudding and got their trucks stuck. Officers Troiano and Stanley identified all individuals and issued several citations for simple trespass.

Officer Drew was working a previously baited duck pond when he heard shooting coming from another area close by. After checking three subjects, Officer Drew found no bait in that area but issued several citations for license violations.

## CITRUS COUNTY

Officer VanNess was in the St. Martins Key area on water patrol when he spotted several shrimp boats offshore at the Ozello Tri-pod. Turning his attention to one that seemed well in shore of the closed for harvest area, Officer VanNess followed the boat and confirmed the crew was actively harvesting shrimp with two trawls in the water. Officer VanNess documented the actions and location of the shrimp boat by Garmin GPS position. A brief investigation the following day led to the operator of the shrimp boat being issued a citation to pay or appear in Citrus County Court for taking shrimp in the Big Bend closed shrimp nursery.

Officer VanNess and Lieutenant Jones were on water patrol on the Salt River in an area commonly referred to as the "Narrows." The officers saw a person known to be a commercial harvester standing on a nearby island. After the man left, the officers discovered several bushels of oysters and a cull board piled high with oysters. A surveillance detail was set up on the island to wait for the oysterman to return. Two subjects returned and began transporting the oysters to their boat as the surveillance team watched. Both men took three bags of oysters and loaded them on the boat. They then returned for the next three bags. As they started walking to the boat, Lieutenant Jones stepped out of the woods and ordered the two to the ground. The two complied without incident. Both subjects were issued a notice to appear in Citrus County Court for multiple oyster violations:

- Possession of untagged oysters
- Possession of 66 percent undersized oysters
- Failure to cull on open oyster bar
- Failure to protect from contaminants

## COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer McDonald received information and a photograph of an 8-point buck that appeared to be shot in the neck and was suspected of being taken on Oleno State Park property. Officer McDonald located blood, hair and drag sign on Oleno State Park property across from the suspect's residence. The following day, Officers McDonald and Nichols proceeded to the residence of the suspect, who was sitting in his shooting house on the border of Oleno State Park. He denied killing the deer, but when a

photograph of the deer was shown to the suspect, he admitted to killing the deer a few days prior. Officers verified the blood, hair and corn located directly in front of the shooting house on state park property. The subject denied any knowledge of the corn and told the officers the deer was shot on his land and then crossed the fence to die on state property. He admitted to crossing the fence and removing the deer. Charges will be direct filed for hunting on a state park and removing/capturing, killing an animal on state park property. A non-criminal infraction will be issued for illegal entry into a state park.

Officer Yates was patrolling the Osceola Wildlife Management Area and encountered several subjects lined up, actively running deer dogs in a still hunt area. Officer Yates conducted a hunting license check on the subjects in violation. Officer Yates explained to the seasoned subjects where they needed to be running the deer dogs to be in compliance. Officer Yates cited two subjects for hunting in a still hunt area with deer dogs. Two written warnings were also issued to a young subject for related violations.

## **COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING**

### **ALACHUA COUNTY**

Lieutenant Ferguson and Officer Stanley attended the annual High Springs Christmas Parade. With several thousand people in attendance and the vessel decorated with Christmas lights, the parade was a success.

## **NORTHEAST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **ORANGE COUNTY**

Officer Presser was on patrol at the Lake Underhill Fish Management Area in Orlando when he saw two individuals fishing from the dock. When asked to provide their fishing licenses, one of the subjects opened a backpack to look for their license. Inside the backpack, Officer Presser noticed a black bass which was still alive. The subject claimed possession of the bass, which is illegal to keep from the area, and was issued a notice to appear for the fish management area violation. The fish was returned to the water alive.

#### **VOLUSIA COUNTY**

Officer Vanas was on patrol in the Tiger Bay/Rima Ridge Unit Wildlife Management Area (WMA) the week between the deer quota hunt and small game season. The WMA was closed to hunting at this time. He encountered two subjects wearing orange who advised they were deer hunting. Each subject was issued a citation for the violation.

Officer Edson was on patrol in the Tiger Bay/Rima Ridge Unit during the small game hunt when he encountered a man who was hunting with a centerfire rifle, which is a violation during small game season. He was issued a citation for the violation and a warning for no wildlife management area permit.

Officer Edson responded to a report of shots fired and possible taking of illegal deer in Pierson. The time delay on the call was eight hours. After a thorough investigation Officer Edson found one man to be in possession of a cooler containing fresh deer meat. He was cited for possession of untagged deer meat.

Officer Pelzel saw an adult male fishing with other people on a pier that is difficult to access. Officer Pelzel waited at an exit point to check the subject's catch. She saw one of the subject's companions exit the area first and, after observing the officer, make a phone call on her cell phone. Officer Pelzel ran toward the location of the pier and saw the subject tossing fish into the bushes. The fish were retrieved, and he was issued a criminal citation for possession of undersized sheepshead.

#### BREVARD COUNTY

While on foot patrol Officer Balgo conducted a resource inspection on three individuals fishing under a causeway. He located five undersized spotted sea trout in a cooler. Officer Balgo interviewed the group and determined who caught the undersized trout. Citations were issued accordingly.

While on foot patrol under the Pineda Causeway Officer Balgo saw an individual throwing a cast net. He contacted the man and found him to be in possession of three undersized mangrove snapper and one undersized black drum. The man was issued citations for illegal method for catching the snapper and a citation for possession of undersized snapper and drum.

Officers conducted a detail to address night time activity in an area that included boating, resource, and traffic enforcement. Officers conducted vessel stops to address violations that were occurring on the St. Johns River. Traffic stops were initiated on vehicles speeding around the Seminole Ranch Conservation Area. The fastest speed was 62 in a 35, and one individual was arrested for driving while license suspended and booked into the county jail.

While on patrol at the Eau Gallie Causeway Relief Bridge, Officer Maslo conducted a resource inspection on a subject that was cast netting. That individual said a male subject crossed the highway to fish under the bridge where his location would be concealed. Officer Maslo was able to locate the subject in question who was concealed by a large bush. During the inspection Officer Maslo found the subject to be in possession of five undersized spotted sea trout, one of which was tossed up in the rocks in a plastic bag, while the other four were in a five-gallon bucket. The subject admitted to catching all the fish. He was issued a warning for over the bag limit of

spotted sea trout, and a notice to appear for possession of five undersized spotted sea trout.

While on patrol Officer Dubose saw a vehicle backed up to a local waterway. After approaching the vehicle, the officer spoke with three individuals who were fishing at the water's edge. A resource inspection revealed undersized snook, seatrout, and sheepshead. The man who claimed to have caught all the fish did not possess a fishing license. A notice to appear was issued for the offenses and the fish were returned to the water.

Officers Delano and Kearney received a call stating people were taking illegal fish near a local causeway. After observing the group for some time, the officers were able to identify the men. As the group came to shore to load their vehicle, the officers approached. At first, the men denied catching any fish. A resource inspection revealed the men were in possession of 28 sheepshead, 21 of which were undersized. A notice to appear was issued to two of the men.

#### OSCEOLA COUNTY

Officers Dubose and Summers were on airboat patrol in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes Wildlife Management Area (WMA) as they watched an airboat with two subjects on board. The airboat went behind a cypress head and the officers heard three consecutive shotgun blasts. The officers contacted the two subjects and found that one of the subjects harvested a bobcat. Bobcats are prohibited to be taken out of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes WMA. The individual was charged accordingly.

#### INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

While off-duty Officer Matthews saw a man catch what appeared to be an undersized snook. After watching the man put the fish into a cooler then continue fishing, an on-duty officer was called. Officers Dubose and Delano arrived on scene and conducted a resource inspection. Their inspection revealed one undersized snook. A notice to appear was issued for the violation.

#### PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Cheshire was on patrol near Crescent Lake when he saw a subject cast netting. Officer Cheshire conducted a fisheries inspection and found that the subject had caught and kept several bream along with the tilapia he was targeting. The subject was cited for unlawful method of taking freshwater game fish and they were returned to the water alive.

Officer Bernard was contacted by Putnam Sheriff's Office about a traffic stop they were conducting in which one of the occupants was in possession of a common snapping turtle. Officer Bernard arrived on scene and the subject admitted that he was going to



eat the turtle. The subject was cited for possession of a snapping turtle and the animal was returned to the water alive.

Officer Chriest was on patrol at Orange Springs Boat Ramp when she saw a bass boat with two people onboard returning from the lake. Officer Chriest suspected that the vessel had been fishing, so she made contact for a resource inspection. It was found that the vessel had ten black bass onboard; five of which were greater than 16-inches in length. The operator of the vessel took responsibility for the oversized bass and was issued a citation for the violation.

Officer Seiler received information regarding bait being placed inside Ocala Wildlife Management Area (WMA). During his investigation he discovered signs of hunting activity including marked trails leading to tree stands, a mineral block, and corn scattered around the stands. Officer Chriest checked back on the location and saw a vehicle parked near the baited area. Officers Seiler and Chriest followed the known trail and located a subject actively hunting from one of the tree stands with a scoped Remington 770 rifle. Corn was on the ground around the stand. The subject was issued a citation for hunting over bait on Ocala WMA.

## LAKE COUNTY

Officers Scrambling and Shaw were working a trespass complaint off Lake Apopka when they saw one male subject fishing and conducted a resource inspection. They found the subject did not have a valid fishing license. During the investigation, it was discovered through a warrant check that the subject was a convicted felon on probation. The subject was in possession of loaded firearm, ammunition, methamphetamine, drug paraphernalia and had a suspended driver's license. The subject was arrested and transported to the Lake County Jail.

## PORT CANAVERAL / MERRITT ISLAND REFUGE

Lieutenant Bonds, Officer Eller, and Officer Hallsten were on patrol offshore outside Port Canaveral for the commercial Spanish mackerel season. They were working a detail in coordination with the offshore patrol vessel "Seahawk" in response to numerous complaints from the fishery. Multiple inspections were conducted, but two of the inspections revealed that the captains were not marking their net buoys with the vessels identification numbers. This is an issue because a large net of that size can be illegally fished and if inspected the responsible party cannot be held accountable because there are not any identifiers on the net. This violation was documented and both captains were cited accordingly.

The officers returned to Port Canaveral and began conducting dockside inspections of commercial harvesters as they off-loaded their product at a local fish house. Officer Eller noticed that one of the subjects was attempting to sell 375-pounds of king mackerel and 48-pounds of cobia by using licensing that did not belong to him. Agency databases verified that the subject did not have any of the proper licensing required to

sell the fish, nor did the subject have the proper licensing to even possess such high quantities of fish. Further inspection revealed that the vessel was registered to a deceased individual and not registered through the state. The fish were seized, and the subject was cited accordingly.

Officer Caleb Hallsten received intelligence that a subject was illegally possessing a large redfish near the barge canal on the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. He responded to the area and began to search for the subject. Officer Hallsten located the subject and saw him actively fishing. Officer Hallsten contacted the subject and conducted an interview. The large fish was located and measured. The red drum measured over 40-inches which is 13-inches over slot. The fish was returned alive to the water and the subject received a criminal citation for the violation.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### OSCEOLA COUNTY

Titusville area officers attended the Central Florida Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) awards banquet in Osceola County. The officers were presented with an Award of Excellence for their Boating Under the Influence (BUI) enforcement efforts in Brevard, Osceola, and Indian River Counties.

## SOUTHWEST REGION

### CASES

#### CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Salem and Officer Kobs received a call from dispatch to assist someone whose vehicle was locked inside the Webb Management Area's gun range after hours. When the officers arrived on scene, nobody was there but they did see a pickup truck parked in a parking space behind the gate. Officer Salem approached the vehicle, looked in the bed of the pickup truck, and saw a dead fox squirrel inside. A short time later a male and female showed up at the gate. During a short conversation with them, Officer Salem asked if they had been hunting during the day and they said no. Officer Salem asked the male if the truck belonged to him and he said yes. He brought the male subject to the side and asked him again if he had shot anything. The male admitted to shooting what he called "a big squirrel," with a 9mm pistol earlier in the day. Further investigation revealed the male did not have a valid management area permit. He was issued a notice to appear for killing a fox squirrel and was issued a warning for not possessing a management area permit.

Officer Lejarzar was on patrol in a local state park when he saw someone in the park after hours. After contacting a juvenile subject, Office Lejarzar determined the juvenile was in possession of snake handling equipment and a diamondback rattlesnake. The

juvenile claimed he was there because he wanted to release the snake. Further investigation revealed he did not have the proper permits to possess the venomous snake. The juvenile was issued an infraction for being in the park after hours and a warning for not possessing the proper permits for the snake. The snake was later released unharmed.

Officer Norris and Officer Zampella were on patrol when they saw two vehicles towing trailers loaded down with yard debris. The officers waited a short time and began a search of the area. The officers located the two vehicles along with three men who were throwing yard debris out of the trailers onto the ground. When the officers asked the men what they were doing, they said they didn't make it to the dump on time and needed to get rid of the debris. They also admitted they knew what they were doing was illegal. The officers photographed the yard debris, had the men load it back on their trailers and issued each a misdemeanor notice to appear (NTA) for littering more than fifteen pounds of material.

## HARDEE COUNTY

Officer Franks and Officer Lebreton were on night patrol strategically hidden off the roadway. A vehicle drove by their location very slowly. The officers followed the vehicle at a safe distance for several miles. The driver shined a light out of the side window, spotlighting a deer on the side of the road. The driver fired a shot at the deer but missed. The deer walked in front of the truck and towards the passenger side of the vehicle. The passenger shined a light at the deer and took a shot. The passenger also missed the deer. Officer Lebreton activated his emergency lights and stopped the truck. There were two loaded rifles in the truck, but the officers could not find the spotlight. Officer Stasko and K9 Pearson assisted in finding the handheld spotlight that the passenger had thrown out of the window. Both subjects were given a NTA for hunting off the roadway and taking of deer by gun and light. Both rifles and the spotlight were seized as evidence.

## HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

While on water patrol in downtown Tampa, Officer Wilkins and Lieutenant Van Trees saw a vessel operating at night with improper navigation lights. The officers stopped the vessel to address the violation. During a boating safety inspection, it was apparent the operator was impaired. Officer Wilkins performed seated field sobriety tasks (SFSTs) with the operator. After the SFST's, Officer Wilkins arrested the subject for boating under the influence. The subject was booked into the Hillsborough County Jail for boating under the influence and was issued citations for refusal to submit to a breath test and numerous other boating safety violations.

While on water patrol in Upper Tampa Bay, Officer Wilkins and Officer Specialist Martinez saw a vessel with two individuals onboard. Officer Wilkins contacted the individuals to conduct boating safety and resource inspections. Officer Wilkins saw a large quantity of empty beer cans on the deck of the vessel and several signs of

impairment from the operator. Officer Wilkins performed seated field sobriety tasks on the subject and placed him under arrest for boating under the influence. The operator was transported to Hillsborough County Jail where he provided a breath sample of .12 Breath Alcohol Content.

Lieutenant Van Trees received a complaint about possible trespassing on a Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) property that butted up to a residential neighborhood. Lieutenant Van Trees arrived at the neighborhood and found a pickup truck with dog boxes in the bed of the truck. Lieutenant Van Trees tracked where the men had walked through a yard and hopped a fence into the SWFWMD property. Soon after this discovery, Officer Wilkins and Officer Specialist Phillippi arrived on scene. The three officers set up different points of surveillance. After waiting and hearing the men and their dogs working on the property, the officers confronted the subjects as they were about to come back over the fence. The officers found two men with two hunting dogs and equipment consistent with hog hunting. After interviewing the subjects, both men were cited for entering SWFWMD district lands after hours, entering SWFWMD district lands from an undesignated entrance, hunting in an undesignated area, and dogs not leashed or caged when not part of an approved hunting program or permitted by a special use authorization.

While on patrol at the Williams Park boat ramp, Lieutenant Laskowski saw an individual attempt to dock his vessel. The individual had a hard time stopping his vessel and left the vessel controls without taking the vessel out of gear. The vessel slowly traveled up the dock, rubbing against the dock before the individual took the vessel out of gear. Lieutenant Laskowski detected signs of alcohol impairment during the subsequent boating safety inspection. Lieutenant Laskowski had the operator complete standardized seated field sobriety tasks. Based on Lieutenant Laskowski's observations, the individual was placed under arrest for operating a vessel while his normal faculties were impaired by alcohol. He was transported to the Hillsborough county jail where he submitted to a breath test. His breath alcohol content (BAC) was .153 and .157, almost twice the legal limit of .08.

While on water patrol near Cockroach Bay, Lieutenant Laskowski saw two individuals fishing from a vessel. Upon conducting a fisheries inspection, he discovered one of the individuals to be in possession of two undersized redfish during a closed season. The fish were measured at fifteen and twelve and one-half inches. The legal minimum length for redfish is eighteen inches. The individual was cited for possession of undersize redfish and issued warnings for possession of over the bag limit and possession of redfish during a closed season.

While on land patrol Officer LaRosa saw two individuals fishing from a bridge in Hillsborough County. Upon conducting a fisheries inspection, she discovered one of the individuals to be in possession of an oversized redfish during the closed season. The fish measured thirty-two inches. The legal maximum length for redfish is twenty-seven inches. The individual was cited for possession of oversized redfish and issued a warning for possession of a redfish during the closed season.

While on water patrol at the Gandy boat ramp, Officer Freda, Officer Pettifer and Officer Caldwell initiated a resource inspection on a vessel with three people onboard. During the inspection, they discovered twenty-one spotted seatrout in the vessel. The recreational bag limit for spotted seatrout is four per person. All three subjects were cited for possession of over the bag limit of spotted seatrout.

While on land patrol Officer Godfrey saw a vehicle parked at a location known to him as a place where people often trespass to go fish on private farming land. Officer Godfrey saw that the fence was intact, and the property was posted with "No Trespassing" signs. Officer Godfrey tracked down two subjects who were actively fishing on the property and cited them for trespassing.

## LEE COUNTY

Officer Winton was on patrol near Alligator Creek when he saw a subject who appeared to be fishing from a bridge. Officer Winton approached the subject, who informed him that he had been fishing and had fish in the cooler in his truck. Consent to search the cooler was obtained and Officer Winton discovered six black drum (five of which were oversized), three undersized sheepshead, and oysters harvested in a closed area. The subject was issued a notice to appear for possession of oversized black drum and undersized sheepshead, as well as warnings for over the bag limit of black drum and illegally harvested oysters.

Officer Winton saw a pontoon boat violating a posted slow speed zone and conducted a vessel stop. During the stop, it was discovered that the vessel was a rental. Officer Winton determined that the vessel was over its capacity, did not have enough life jackets onboard and that the operator was born after January 1, 1988, but did not have proof of boater safety education. Officer Winton followed the vessel back to the livery and contacted the manager. The manager was issued three notices to appear for the violations.

Officer Stapleton and Officer Bell conducted a stop on a vessel violating a posted federal manatee zone. During the stop the officers gathered information on the livery that rented the vessel to the individuals and discovered several violations had occurred with the rental. The officers issued the operator of the vessel a warning for the speed violation and then proceeded to the livery location. The livery employee that rented the vessel did not possess an approved NASBLA boating safety card. Several other violations were discovered as well. He was issued a NTA for renting vessels without having taken the approved course and the other violations were addressed with the manager of the company.

Officer Garcia and Officer Bell were on water patrol in the SAFE boat when they saw a vessel returning from the Gulf. An inspection was conducted on the vessel and three undersized tripletail and one undersized mangrove snapper were discovered in a live

well. The operator was issued a notice to appear for the undersized fish and was given an up-to-date Saltwater Regulations booklet.

Officer Winton was on vessel patrol in the Caloosahatchee River when he saw a vessel that did not display the required navigation lights. A vessel stop was conducted, and it was determined that the vessel was a rental boat and was not outfitted with the required safety gear. A follow-up investigation was conducted and the subject responsible for the rental was identified. Charges pertaining to renting a vessel without the required safety gear and providing pre-ride instructions without the proper boater safety training are being filed with the State Attorney's Office.

Officer Winton was on state park vessel patrol on the Estero River when he stopped a vessel for a registration violation. During the stop, the operator of the vessel was found to be in possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia. A query revealed that the subject had been previously cited by FWC for possession of marijuana. The officer issued the man a notice to appear for his current violations. The subject was also issued warnings for the vessel registration problems and safety gear violations.

Officer Winton was on vessel patrol in Bonita Springs when he saw a personal watercraft being operated in a reckless manner. A vessel stop was conducted, and Officer Winton noticed that the operator showed signs of impairment. After the man performed poorly on field sobriety tasks, he was placed under arrest for boating under the influence and reckless operation of a personal watercraft. At the jail, the subject provided breath samples of .125 and .123, almost three hours after the time of arrest.

Officer Hardgrove was checking vessels at a boat ramp when he encountered three men returning from a hunting trip on a boat. The men had shot and killed a wild hog. Knowing that most of the land in the area was part of the Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park, Officer Hardgrove interviewed the men to determine where the hog was killed. The men admitted to shooting the hog on state park property in violation of park rules. Appropriate charges were filed.

A U.S. Coast Guard patrol boat stopped a commercial fishing boat late at night and noticed the two men on board were acting very suspiciously. One of the boarding officers had been through a training course provided by FWC officers focusing on illegal commercial netting operations. The boarding officer noticed a wet monofilament gill net the men were trying to conceal in the back of the boat. The USCG called Officer Stapleton and Officer Perry to the scene. It was determined the men were in violation of net fishing regulations and both men were arrested. The illegal net, which measured around 15,000 square feet, was seized. The two men were cited for flagrant violations which could result in several thousand dollars in fines, imprisonment of up to five years, the forfeiture of the vessel and fishing gear, and suspension or revocation of their saltwater fishing privileges.

Officer Hardgrove and Lieutenant Barrett were checking commercial mullet fishing vessels when they stopped one subject using cast nets that appeared to be very large.

The officers measured the nets and determined that three out of the four cast nets the man was using were over the legal fourteen-foot length. The illegal nets were seized, and the man was charged appropriately.

Officer Hardgrove and Lieutenant Barrett were checking people fishing from a bridge when they saw a man harvesting several sheepshead by the use of a cast net. When they asked the man if he had caught anything else, he indicated that he had some mullet and a “jack” in his cooler. It turned out that the “jack” was actually an eighteen-inch permit, which is illegal to harvest with anything other than a hook and line. The man was charged appropriately.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

While on land patrol at Blind Pass, Officer Specialist Martinez saw a male and a female fishing on the jetty. He overheard the female ask the male if the fish she just caught was large enough to keep. The male stated that it was undersized, but the female put it in the bucket anyway. Officer Specialist Martinez contacted the two individuals and found numerous undersized fish in the bucket including mangrove snapper and sheepshead. The female subject was issued a resource citation and a warning for her violations.

While on land patrol at Gandy Beach, Officer Specialist Martinez saw an individual near a jon boat at the water's edge. He conducted a resource inspection and discovered the subject was seine net fishing. The subject admitted to commercial fishing despite having no saltwater products license. The subject was cited accordingly for this violation as well as for not having his nets properly marked.

While on water patrol of the Treasure Island inter-coastal waterway, Officer Specialist Martinez stopped a vessel to conduct a boating safety inspection. Upon contacting the operator of the vessel, he saw several signs of impairment and performed seated field sobriety tasks with the operator. After the tasks were completed, Officer Specialist Martinez arrested the subject for boating under the influence. Officer Specialist Martinez read the standard implied consent to the subject and he refused to provide a lawful test of his breath. The subject was booked into the Pinellas County Jail on BUI and received a citation for the refusal to submit to a breath test.

While on land patrol, Officer Specialist Bibeau saw two individuals carrying fishing equipment back to a nearby vehicle. He contacted the individuals to conduct a fisheries inspection. Officer Specialist Bibeau found the subjects to be in possession of two redfish and an undersized sheepshead. He read the subjects their Miranda rights. After questioning, one of the subjects claimed responsibility for all three fish. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the subject a misdemeanor citation for violation of executive order pertaining to redfish and warnings for the other fisheries violations.

While on land patrol, Officer Specialist Bibeau saw two individuals fishing from a bridge. He waited for the subjects to begin packing up their belongings before conducting a fisheries inspection. Officer Specialist Bibeau found the subjects to be in possession of

two undersized gag grouper, the largest of which measured only thirteen inches. They also had multiple undersized mangrove snapper. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote both subjects a misdemeanor citation for possession of an undersized gag grouper and a warning for possession of undersized mangrove snapper.

Officer Specialist Bibeau saw multiple individuals actively wade fishing. He waited for the individuals to return to their vehicles prior to contacting them to conduct a fisheries inspection. Officer specialist Bibeau found one of the individuals to be in possession of an undersized and out of season redfish, an undersized seatrout and an undersized sheepshead. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for violating the executive order pertaining to redfish and possession of an undersized redfish along with two warnings for the other fisheries violations.

Officer Pettifer and Officer LaRosa responded to the complaint of an individual cleaning a snook at his residence. When the officers arrived at the address, the owner greeted them in the driveway. The officers noticed blood and fish scales on the individual's hands and clothing. The individual took them to the side of his garage where they saw a snook carcass and two spotted seatrout. The snook measured thirty-four inches and was over the legal-size limit. The officers explained that snook and red drum in Pinellas County are catch and release only due to an executive order related to red tide. The two-spotted seatrout were measured and were over twenty inches in length. The individual was cited for possession of a snook during closed season and possession of one oversized spotted seatrout. He was also issued a warning for possession of an oversized snook.

Officer Pettifer and Officer Smith responded to the complaint of an individual keeping redfish near Fort Desoto. Upon their arrival, the officers discovered an individual to be in possession of thirteen undersized redfish. In Pinellas County, red drum are catch and release only due to an executive order related to red tide. The individual was cited for possession of redfish during a closed season and possession of undersized and over the bag limit of redfish.

Officer Specialist Bibeau saw an individual actively fishing from a bridge. He waited until the individual began to leave the area prior to conducting a fisheries inspection. The individual advised that he had only caught three mullet and a sheepshead and showed Officer Specialist Bibeau a cooler containing the fish. As Officer Specialist Bibeau began to leave, he noticed a five-gallon bucket containing a cast net in the backseat of the individual's vehicle. Officer Specialist Bibeau asked to see the bucket and located a small snook hidden underneath the cast net. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for violation of executive order 18-38 pertaining to snook and possession of an undersized snook.

While on patrol near the Gandy Bridge, Officer Freda, Officer Pettifer and Officer Caldwell saw two individuals fishing. The officers watched the individuals fish and then initiated a resource inspection. During the inspection, the officers discovered the two individuals to be in possession of two undersized redfish. They found the redfish on a



stringer in the rocks near where the two individuals were fishing. Both men were cited for possession of an undersized redfish.

Officer Specialist Bibeau saw an individual actively fishing underneath a bridge. He waited for the individual to return to his vehicle, prior to making contact, to conduct a fisheries inspection. Officer Specialist Bibeau found the individual to be in possession of seven undersized sheepshead. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for possession of the illegal fish.

Officer Specialist Bibeau saw a vessel returning from federal waters. He stopped the vessel and conducted a fisheries inspection. Officer Specialist Bibeau located two undersized gag grouper, one undersized red grouper, one undersized black grouper and an undersized cobia. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the operator of the vessel a misdemeanor citation for possession of undersized gag grouper and warnings for undersized red grouper and black grouper. Another individual onboard the vessel admitted to catching the undersized cobia and was issued a misdemeanor citation for that fisheries violation.

Officer Smith and Officer Pettifer were working in south Pinellas County at a busy boat ramp. They saw a vessel being retrieved from the water. The officers asked the occupants if they caught any fish, and they replied that they had grunts. During the resource inspection, the officers opened a cooler and on top of the ice were several grunts. Below the ice on the bottom of the cooler were two red snapper which are currently closed to harvest. Additionally, the officers located two lane snapper that were cut up. Lane snapper are required to be maintained in whole condition. The vessel captain was issued a notice to appear for the red snapper and a warning for lane snapper not in whole condition.

While on land patrol at the Dunedin Causeway, Officer Specialist Ferguson saw two men returning from fishing and initiated a resource inspection. He was told by the men that they had caught some trout but released all the fish they caught. Officer Specialist Ferguson saw a yellow bait bucket inside another larger bucket that one of the subjects was carrying. He saw several spotted sea trout hidden in the bait bucket and told the subject he saw the hidden fish. After measuring the fish, it was determined the subject had numerous undersized spotted sea trout. The subject was cited according for the violations.

While on land patrol near the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, Officer Specialist Martinez-Rivera initiated a resource inspection with two subjects fishing underneath a bridge. He discovered several undersized fish to include red drum and sheepshead. Officer Specialist Martinez Rivera cited one of the subjects for possession of undersized red drum and warned them for the undersized sheepshead and possession of red drum during a designated closure.

MANATEE COUNTY

While on patrol at the South Skyway Fishing Pier State Park, Officer Klobuchar was performing resource inspections when he approached a subject who had been catching several species of fish. During questioning, the individual informed Officer Klobuchar that he had several small snapper in his possession. Upon inspection of the subject's cooler, Officer Klobuchar noticed several mangrove snapper and a black sea bass that appeared to be undersized. The subject was found to be in possession of four undersized mangrove snapper and one undersized black sea bass. The subject was educated on the proper sizes of these species as well as other likely species to be caught at that location. He was given one citation for the undersized snapper and one warning for the sea bass.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### LEE COUNTY

Officer Thompson, Officer Garcia and Officer Stapleton were conducting a directed conservation patrol through surveillance at a local fishing hotspot. They saw four men fishing with cast nets along the beach. The men would put down their cast nets and just stand around any time anyone else was in the area. This suspicious activity drew the officers' attention and they continued to watch the men. When the men finished fishing, the officers approached them to conduct an inspection. The men were found in possession of four snook. Three of the snook were undersized, all were harvested illegally with a cast net and all were harvested during the executive order closure following red tide related fish kills in the area. All four men were cited for numerous violations.

Officer Winton conducted a directed conservation patrol in the form of speed enforcement of local panther protection zones. During the patrol, Officer Winton issued two criminal citations, six noncriminal citations and seven written warnings. The highest speed recorded was 86 mph in a 45-mph zone. While conducting the enforcement detail, Officer Winton responded to information that a panther had been hit by a vehicle in the same area he was enforcing speed regulations. The panther was injured but was successfully captured by Officer Winton with the assistance of FWC biologists. The panther was brought to Naples for rehabilitation.

Officer Thomson and Officer Garcia were conducting a directed conservation patrol through observing activities in a local fishing hotspot (using the cover of an unmarked vehicle). They saw a man carrying a large snook to his truck. When they later approached the man, a consensual search of the toolbox on the back of his truck revealed a large snook that had been harvested by the use of a gig. The illegally used gig and the illegally harvested snook were seized and the man was cited for multiple violations.

### PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer Smith was working a directed conservation patrol of commercial reef fish vessels (Individual Fishing Quota - IFQ) at a popular seafood house. Officer Smith saw the offload of several hundred pounds of reef fish from the commercial vessel. During further inspection Officer Smith located a swordfish aboard. The commercial fishing vessel did not have their NOAA Limited Access Permit for Swordfish. NOAA was contacted – FWC and NOAA are working a joint investigation on the vessel captain and owner. Federal charges are pending.

## **COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING**

### **LEE COUNTY**

Officer Winton and Officer Garcia participated in events at local state parks. The officers provided outreach at the Great Outdoors Day event at Lover's Key State Park, where they displayed FWC equipment, a live alligator and provided information about boating and resource regulations. The officers provided law enforcement services at the Holiday Bazaar event at Koreshan State Park, where they assisted with traffic control, responded to medical emergencies and provided security for the park. Hundreds of spectators were educated with the officers' presentations.

Officer Gray worked an outreach event at Lovers Key State Park for the ground-breaking ceremony of its new Welcome and Discovery Center. Local business and government leaders attended the event along with about 100 people.

### **PASCO COUNTY**

Officer Specialist Pulaski and Duty Officer Silvest conducted an outreach to a local homeowner's association. The topic they discussed was living with alligators. There were thirty-five people in attendance.

## **SOUTH REGION A**

### **CASES**

#### **PALM BEACH COUNTY**

Officers Morrow and Ames received a complaint about people catching snook at Sawfish Bay Park and keeping them without measuring the fish. Upon arriving at the location, Officers Morrow and Ames contacted two subjects actively fishing and conducted a fisheries inspection. The officers located and seized an undersized snook. One of the subjects admitted to catching the fish and knowing the size limits. The subject was issued a notice to appear (citation) for keeping an undersized snook.

Officer Brodbeck was dispatched to a complaint received by investigations regarding the illegal sale of a sea turtle shell. Upon searching law enforcement databases, the

officer was able to locate a Florida identification card belonging to the subject of the complaint and contacted the subject at their residence. The subject admitted to offering an Atlantic Ridley shell for sale online. It is a felony to offer for sale any marine turtle or parts. After taking possession of the shell and taking photographs, Officer Brodbeck placed the subject under arrest for the violation. The subject was transported to the Palm Beach County Jail.

Officers Brodbeck and Godward were on patrol at the Juno Pier conducting resource inspections. Officer Brodbeck approached three individuals leaving the pier and asked if they caught any fish. They stated they caught a bluefish and a snook. Upon inspecting their cooler, a snook well below the legal-size limit was found. The size limits for commonly caught fish, including snook, are prominently displayed at the entrance to the pier. One subject took responsibility for the snook which measured 22 inches. A misdemeanor resource citation was issued, and the fish was seized for evidence.

Officers Matthews and Langley were on water patrol in Boca Raton when they conducted a fisheries inspection on a vessel returning from offshore. While searching one of the hatches on the vessel, the officers discovered an undersized cobia and two undersized mutton snapper. The captain of the vessel was cited accordingly for the violations.

A person was injured while duck hunting on South Florida Water Management District property (STA 1 West) with two other people. The injured subject waded about fifty yards away to retrieve a fallen duck. Several more ducks flew low into the area and the other two subjects in the hunting party shot at them. Moments later they heard the subject who had gone to retrieve the duck, yelling. The injured subject sustained multiple pellet shot wounds to the left side of his face, arm, and hand.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Howell recently responded to the report of the illegal possession of a raccoon. Upon arrival, he found one individual in possession of a raccoon without the required license. The raccoon was seized and placed at a licensed facility. Two warnings were issued for the illegal possession.

## BROWARD COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Corteguera responded to a complaint regarding the illegal possession of a raccoon. Upon arrival, he found one subject in possession of two raccoons without the required license. Six misdemeanor citations and four infractions were issued for the illegal possession and other related violations. The raccoons were seized and placed at a licensed facility. Officer Grant assisted on this incident.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Corteguera recently responded to a report regarding the illegal possession of venomous reptiles. Upon arrival, he found one subject in possession of ten venomous snakes without the required license. Two of the snakes were dead due to poor conditions. The snakes were seized and placed at a licensed facility. Six misdemeanor citations were issued for the illegal possession and related

violations. FWC Lieutenant Harp, Investigator Teems, and Officer Forrest assisted with this incident.

## MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Brevik was conducting water patrol near Manatee Pocket, when he saw an operator of a vessel approach the dock at Sandsprit Park. Officer Brevik advised the subject he was going to perform a saltwater fisheries inspection. The subject stated that he had caught a couple mahi during his trip. The subject was found to be in possession of eight mahi under the state minimum size limit of 20 inches. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officer Carroll was conducting patrol at Sandsprit Park and saw a commercial fishing vessel being towed by a vehicle leave the boat ramp. Officer Carroll conducted a traffic stop and discovered several traffic violations. Officer Carroll discovered the vessel to be not secured to the trailer by any strap on either bow or stern of the vessel. Officer Carroll issued a notice to appear to the subject for attaching a tag that was not assigned to the trailer and educated the subject on properly refrigerating the fish being sold to wholesale dealers.

Officers Riggs, Carroll, and Brevik were conducting water patrol around Sandsprit Park. The officers received information that a kayaker was passed-out in a kayak that was in the channel of the Manatee Pocket. The officers saw no navigational lights on the vessel and conducted a vessel stop. Officer Riggs conducted a BUI investigation and determined the operator to be impaired. Officer Riggs arrested the operator for BUI and issued three other UBC's for no navigational lights, no life jacket and no sound producing device.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Toby responded to a complaint regarding the illegal possession of a deer. Upon arrival, he found one subject in possession of a deer without the required license. One misdemeanor citation and two warnings were issued for the illegal possession and related violations. The deer was seized and placed at a license facility. Officer Kirkland assisted on this incident.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Numerous FWC officers provided vessel security for the Palm Beach County Holiday Boat Parade. Lieutenant Russo, Officers Rogers and Moss led the Parade along the ICW in Northern Palm Beach County. The parade had 75 participating vessels and traveled from North Palm Beach to Jupiter. Despite heavy boat traffic, high winds, and hundreds of spectator vessels, there were minimal issues during the event. The parade committee was thankful for the FWC as well as the various other agencies, including U.S. Coast Guard, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, West Palm Beach Police, North Palm Police, and Jupiter Police for helping to achieve a successful parade.

## **SOUTH REGION B**

### **CASES**

#### **MIAMI DADE COUNTY**

Officer Hedgepeth, Officer McKinley, Officer Padilla, and Officer Bruder stopped a vessel northeast of Fowey Rocks for a resource inspection. There were two male subjects on board. One subject had no fishing license as well as a warrant for his arrest in Miami. The operator was found to be in possession of thirteen yellowtail snapper. He was three fish over of the limit and was given one citation. The fish were returned to the water. The subject with the warrant was arrested.

Officer Perez and Officer Delgado were on water patrol and saw a “center console” style vessel inbound from Government Cut with multiple fishing rods displayed. They conducted a vessel stop at Norris Cut and conducted a fisheries inspection and a boater safety equipment check. The fisheries inspection found the subjects in possession of multiple undersized fish in the cooler in front of the vessel – one king mackerel, four mutton snapper, two red grouper and one cobia. Appropriate citations were issued.

Officer Dominguez and Officer Delgado were on water patrol near Cape Florida Channel. They conducted a vessel stop on a commercial crawfish vessel. The inspection revealed 17 undersized spiny lobster within the bins intended to harvest for commercial purposes. There was a separate bin with 7 undersized spiny lobster – they are allowed up to 50 to use for luring/enticing lobster into their traps while on the waters of the state. Appropriate citations were issued.

Officer Bruder and Officer Perez were patrolling the Government Cut when they witnessed a boat passing by them with only rod tips exposed. They stopped the vessel and conducted a fisheries inspection which resulted in five vermillion snapper over the limit, two of which were undersized. The operator of the vessel was cited for possession over the limit of vermillion snapper and possession of undersized vermillion snapper.

Officer Bruder and Officer Perez where patrolling the waterways around Bear Cut Bridge when they witnessed a vessel with three male subjects actively fishing. They stopped the vessel and conducted a fisheries inspection which produced four undersized hog fish and two undersized mutton snapper. The owner of the vessel was cited for possession of out of season hog fish, possession of undersized hog fish, possession of hog fish over the limit, and possession of undersized mutton snapper.

Investigator Martin conducted an inspection of a seafood market. Upon entering the fish market, he saw large quantities of lobster, conch, stone crab and blue crab as well as large quantities of fish product (snapper, hogfish, grouper) on ice displays. He requested to see invoices and trip tickets for all product on display. The manager had a

small assortment of receipts for the imported fish from Mexico but no paperwork for the conch or local product to include the lobster, stone crab, etc. The owner was contacted and responded to the market with more invoices for imported fish product from Mexico and for the conch from the Bahamas but was unable to produce any valid trip tickets or invoices for the lobster or stone crab. An inspection of the hogfish revealed 207 pounds of undersized hogfish. While conducting an inspection of the hogfish, the Investigator exited the freezer to observe 3 crates of blue crab that had been dropped off by a local supplier. The Investigator asked to see that trip ticket. The manager stated one was not issued and the owner admitted to not having any trip tickets to write one. The hogfish was seized and stored at a cold storage facility. The owner was issued citations for possession of undersized imported hogfish, failure to keep adequate records and failure to provide the SPL holder with a trip ticket.

Officer Stanton was on water patrol with Officer Cosculluela on the ICW north of Haulover Sandbar. Officer Stanton saw a vessel displaying fishing rods and conducted a vessel stop. A resource inspection revealed one subject in possession of 2 undersized grey triggerfish, 3 undersized mutton snapper, 4 undersized red grouper and 1 undersized black grouper. The harvester who claimed responsibility for the fish was cited accordingly.

Officer Dominguez coordinated a Targeted Enforcement Action to conduct commercial fisheries inspections on but not limited to crawfish and stone crab vessels. The mission of this detail was to ensure all commercial vessels are in-compliance with all Florida Statutes and regulations to include enforcement of commercial boating safety regulations. This TEA involved 16 FWC officers and 6 National Park Service Rangers. There were 4 FWC vessels and 2 NPS vessels used as well as 1 FWC aircraft. The TEA resulted in 38 vessel stops with 114 users checked. There were misdemeanor citations issued for FWC violations and citations issued for various boating safety violations. Numerous written warnings were also issued for boating safety and resource violations.

Captive Wildlife Investigators Smith and Alford recently responded to two lemurs that escaped from a licensed facility. The investigation revealed that a dog compromised the cage, leading to the escape. The lemurs were located and returned to the owner. One warning was issued for the escape.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Smith recently responded to an individual who self-reported her illegal possession of a lemur. Investigator Smith was able to relocate the Lemur to a licensed facility. The lemur had to be chemically immobilized to facilitate the transfer. Two warnings were issued for the illegal possession.

## MONROE COUNTY

While on water patrol in Monroe county, Officer Sapp saw a bully netting boat operating with no navigation lights near Fleming Key. Officer Sapp conducted a vessel stop and saw several small spiny lobster on the deck of the vessel. A marine resource inspection

revealed 13 undersized spiny lobster onboard the vessel. The subject was issued a written warning for no navigation lights and a notice to appear for the undersized spiny lobster. The undersized spiny lobster was returned alive to the water.

FWC Officers Richards, Foell, Sutter and NOAA Officer Robb conducted a marine fishery patrol onboard FWC offshore patrol vessel Trident. The officers focused on large commercial shrimp vessels anchored south of Key West due to the strong winds produced from the cold front. The officers conducted an inspection on commercial shrimp vessel. The officers located three large sacks of spiny lobster hidden beneath sacks of shrimp in the below-deck freezer. A total of 101 spiny lobster were found onboard, with 33 being undersized. The officers also discovered numerous turtle excluding device (TED) violations and the marine sanitation device (MSD) was discharging overboard. Post Miranda, a deck-hand admitting to harvesting all the lobster, without the other deck-hands' knowledge. The crew member was arrested and booked into the Monroe County Detention Facility on numerous misdemeanor charges. The federal TED violations were documented and will be forwarded to the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Officer Jacobs and Officer Garcia were on water patrol when they responded to a call involving two males, on a vessel, possibly harvesting undersized spiny lobsters in the area of Islamorada. While investigating the area, Officer Jacobs saw a vessel matching the description of the complaint. Upon conducting a resource inspection on the vessel, Officer Jacobs found one defendant to be in possession of 8 undersized spiny lobster and one undersized, not in whole condition, yellowtail snapper. The subjects were charged accordingly.

Officer Thompson noticed a commercial crawfish vessel heading back to dock. He pulled alongside the vessel and conducted a resource inspection. The captain stated that he and his mate were done fishing for the day. After inspecting the vessel's catch, Officer Thompson located 19 undersized spiny lobster. Both individuals admitted to catching the lobster and were cited accordingly.

Officer Chesney conducted a resource inspection of a commercial vessel in Turtle Crawl Bank, gulf side of Big Pine Key. He found two gray triggerfish that were inside of the separating tanks in the stern of the vessel. Officer Chesney measured each triggerfish and found them both to undersized. He asked the three crewmen who took the fish from the trap and put into the tanks. One crewman admitted he took them both out of the traps and placed into the separating tanks. The crewman was cited for possession of out of season, undersized, and over the bag limit of gray triggerfish in state gulf waters.

Officer Jacobs and Officer Baumgartner were on patrol traveling southbound on Highway US-1, when they saw a vehicle exceeding the posted speed limit. Upon conducting a traffic stop on the vehicle, the driver was found to be driving without an issued driver's license. The driver was placed under arrest and charged accordingly.



## COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Johnston and Kleis responded to a complaint from a wildlife check station employee in the Big Cypress Wildlife Management Area. The check station employee reported that a subject was in the Bear Island Unit and was in possession of a small spike deer. To be legal, a deer must have one antler at least 5 inches long and have one antler with at least 2 points or greater. When the officers arrived on scene, the subject was at the check station with a small deer in the bed of his truck. The officers measured the antlers and found that the longest one was short of the minimum 5-inch requirement, and neither antler had two or more points. The deer was seized as evidence, the subject was charged accordingly.

Officers Conroy and Arbogast were conducting water patrol when they saw a vessel without any navigational lights approaching them from behind. A vessel stop was initiated to address the violation and conduct a vessel safety inspection. During the inspection, Officers Conroy and Arbogast saw several indicators of impairment. The operator consented to board the officers patrol vessel to perform "Seated Field Sobriety Tests" (SFST). The officers determined the subject was impaired and Officer Conroy placed the operator under arrest for "Boating Under the Influence" (BUI). The vessel operator was transported to the Naples Jail Center.

Officers Johnston, Yurewitch, and Kleis were on water patrol when they saw a large cabin vessel operating without registration numbers or decal displayed. The officers stopped the vessel to address the violations and to conduct a boating safety inspection. As the officers approached, they noticed that the operator was unsteady on his feet. Once the officers pulled up to the vessel, they saw multiple other indicators of impairment from the operator. The operator agreed to participate in "Seated Field Sobriety Tests" (SFST). The officers determined the subject was impaired and Officer Johnston placed the operator under arrest for 'Boating Under the Influence "(BUI). He was booked into the Collier County Jail.

While on patrol in the Big Cypress Preserve, Officer Yaxley, along with a national park service ranger came across fresh tire tracks on a restricted trail. They followed the tracks and located an unpermitted trailer on Big Cypress Preserve property. The officer and ranger located a drain pipe set up to discharge human waste directly onto the ground. Upon further investigation, the owner of the trailer was found to be operating unpermitted heavy machinery in the preserve. He had been stealing fill dirt from the preserve's maintenance pile. Officer Yaxley cited the individual for the illegal dumping and the ranger cited the individual for numerous federal park violations.

Officers Johnston and Kleis responded to a call of a boat accident involving a boat that struck a dock at a high rate of speed. The caller reporting the accident said there was a woman trapped in the debris on board the boat. Upon arrival officers found Collier County Fire Rescue treating the injured woman. She was airlifted to a trauma center where she was found to have non-life-threatening injuries. The officers conducted a vessel accident investigation and found multiple indicators of impairment from the

operator. Witnesses identified the operator, and voiced concerns to the officers that the operator was impaired. Officer Johnston conducted a (BUI) Boating Under the Influence investigation and found the operator to be impaired. The operator was placed under arrest and agreed to provide a breath sample. The breath results indicated the operator was legally intoxicated. The operator was arrested for Boating Under the Influence with property damage and injury. He was booked into the Collier County Jail.

## MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

### COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Kleis responded to a complaint of an alligator near vehicles in a Walmart parking lot. Officer Kleis arrived on scene and located a small, approximate 2 ½ foot alligator in the parking lot. The officer captured the alligator and released it in a pond away from public areas.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Lieutenant Pomares and Officer Guillermo volunteered to accept donations such as toys and other gifts at a collection table at Dadeland Mall. The police officer association trust provides gifts to the children of LE officers who died in the line of duty. The program symbolizes the law enforcement community reaching out and remembering the children of fallen heroes.

Officer Washington attended North Miami Beach Police Athletic League Community Holiday celebration. There were prizes and gifts given to the kids. He also gave a presentation on nonnative species and pet amnesty days/surrendering unwanted pets to over 100 students.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### COLLIER COUNTY

Due to a recent panther fatality, Officers Polly and Thurkettle conducted panther zone speed enforcement on US-41. The officers wrote 7 citations and 13 warnings for speed violations. The fastest speed recorded was 81 MPH in a 45 MPH zone.