

**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report**



Patrol, Protect, Preserve

July 19, 2019 through July 25, 2019

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.

NORTHWEST REGION

CASES

BAY COUNTY

Officers Wicker and Coker were on water patrol in St. Andrews Bay when they received a call from United State Coast Guard (USCG) Panama City asking for assistance with a possible Boating Under the Influence (BUI). The officers arrived just a few minutes after they received the call. Officer Wicker began Standard Field Sobriety Tests (SFST's) on the operator who completed the horizontal gaze nystagmus but refused to complete any other tasks. The operator was placed under arrest for BUI and transported to the Panama City Beach Field Office for a breath sample. The operator was booked into the Bay County Jail for BUI and refusing to supply breath, blood or urine sample.

Officers Wicker, N. Basford and Captain Clements were on water patrol in St. Andrews Bay when they saw a vessel with several occupants on board. The officers stopped the vessel to conduct a boating safety inspection. The operator was showing several signs of impairment and SFST's were conducted. The operator of the vessel was arrested on suspicion of BUI and transported to the Panama City Beach Field Office for a breath sample. He was booked into the Bay County Jail for BUI and refusal to provide a breath, blood or urine sample.

Officers T. Basford, N. Basford and Little were on water patrol in Grand Lagoon when they saw a pontoon vessel with two people on board. The officers conducted a vessel stop to conduct a boating safety inspection. During the inspection, the operator showed signs of impairment and SFST's were conducted. The operator was arrested for

suspicion of BUI and transported to the Panama City Beach Field Office to provide a breath sample. The operator was transported to the Bay County Jail and booked for BUI and refusal to provide a breath, blood or urine sample.

Officer T. Basford was on patrol in St. Andrews State Park when he received a call from USCG Panama City asking for assistance with a possible BUI. USCG brought the vessel and operator to the St. Andrews State Park Boat Ramp where Officer Basford was waiting. The vessel operator displayed indicators of impairment and SFST's were conducted. The operator was arrested for suspicion of BUI and transported to the Panama City Beach Field Office for a breath sample. Once at the office the operator provided breath samples of .126 blood alcohol content and .122 blood alcohol content. The operator was booked into the Bay County Jail for BUI.

Officer Rice was conducting boating safety and resource inspections of vessels at St. Andrews State Park boat ramp. During an inspection of one vessel he found a couple undersize gray triggerfish. Two individuals took responsibility for the fish which measured 11 inches and 14 inches. The season for gray triggerfish is closed at this time. Officer Rice issued the two individuals each a citation for possession of gray triggerfish during closure and warnings for possession of undersized gray triggerfish.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Pettey received information that an individual posted a video on social media of him posing with six cobia on his vessel. The limit for cobia is two per vessel. Officer Pettey identified the subject and met and interviewed him. The subject admitted to possessing the six cobia on his vessel. Two of the cobia were also obviously undersized. Officer Pettey obtained a warrant on the individual for the two violations.

Officer Specialist Clark checked an individual selling mullet along the road side in Pensacola. The individual did not possess the license and was cited for the violation.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers Pifer, Clark, and Hahr were on water patrol in the area of Crab Island when they saw a pontoon vessel operating in violation of the idle speed/no wake zone. While attempting to stop the vessel, the officers noticed the operator was slow to bring the vessel off plane, even after utilizing the patrol vessel's emergency lights and siren. During the stop the operator displayed signs of impairment and standardized field sobriety tasks were conducted. The operator was arrested for BUI, refused to provide a breath sample and was transported to the Okaloosa County Jail.

Officers Pifer, Hahr, and Clark were on water patrol in the area of Crab Island when they saw a personal watercraft (PWC) operating in a reckless manner. The PWC was operating in violation of the idle speed-no wake zone towards a group of anchored vessels with individuals on board and wading in the water. As the PWC approached the vessels and individuals in the water, it turned at the last possible moment to avoid a

collision causing the vessel's wake to splash the individuals in the water. A vessel stop was initiated to address the violation and the operator was issued a criminal citation for reckless operation of a PWC.

Officers Pifer and Corbin were conducting saltwater fisheries inspections at the Okaloosa Island Fishing Pier. There was a complaint of multiple individuals fishing from the pier harvesting undersized spanish mackerel. Four individuals were found to have harvested multiple undersized spanish mackerel. Citations were issued for the violations.

Officer Pifer saw a vehicle driving in a circular pattern on the Eglin Air Force Base beach property on Okaloosa Island, north of Highway 98, in a manner which was damaging the public lands. Officer Pifer stopped his vehicle next to a U.S. Air Force Installation Property sign which clearly states, "Driving on the beach is strictly prohibited." The sign was approximately 25 yards from the suspect vehicle. The driver was issued a criminal citation for damage to public lands by a motor vehicle.

WALTON COUNTY

Officer Bradshaw inspected a camp site on Point Washington Wildlife Management Area (WMA) after learning a subject had left a large amount of trash when he departed the site. Division of Forestry personnel had spoken to the subject about cleaning up the trash prior to leaving but no trash was removed. The subject was identified and will be issued a criminal summons for littering in excess of 15 pounds.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

DUVAL COUNTY

Officer Lemaster was on land-based water patrol at Jim King Boat Ramp checking fishing licenses and performing resource inspections. He came upon an individual fishing from the shoreline who did not have a recreational shoreline fishing license or any identification. The subject gave Officer Lemaster a fictitious name and a check through law enforcement databases revealed "no record found." The subject eventually confessed he gave a fictitious name and Officer Lemaster was able to determine that the subject had a local warrant issued out of Duval County for criminal mischief. The subject was issued a written warning for no fishing license. The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office transported the subject and processed the warrant.

Officer Bryan responded to a complaint of an individual in possession of two small alligators. He responded to the residence and found they had two small alligators in an aquarium. The alligators had been caught in the wild and had been kept captive at the house for approximately one month. Four individuals were cited for the violations.

Office Read investigated a recurring derelict vessel in the area of the Intracoastal Waterway South of Atlantic Boulevard Bridge near marker 25. The responsible party was identified, located, and issued a notice to appear. The responsible party did not request an administrative hearing within the allotted time frame. The vessel was subsequently removed from the water and destroyed by the City of Jacksonville. A repayment demand letter was sent to the responsible party for the costs associated with removal and destruction.

CITRUS COUNTY

Officer Ulrich planned and conducted a detail targeting commercial fishing violations off the coast of Citrus County. Officers Banks, Reid, Browning, Creel, Willis, Suttles, Hughes and Belle participated. The officers conducted multiple commercial shrimp boat inspections. During the detail, two misdemeanor violations were documented for commercial licensing. Ten uniform boating citations and 32 written warnings were also issued.

Officers in Citrus County conducted Phase II of their annual scallop detail. Investigator James and Officers Brady, Hastings, Cheshire, Davenport and Geeraerts participated. During the detail, four reckless operation of a vessel misdemeanors were documented. The participating officers collectively issued 14 uniform boating citations, 55 boating safety warnings, five resource citations, eight dive flag citations and 69 dive flag related warnings.

Officers Suttles and Hughes were on patrol in the scallop grounds during the opening weekend of scallop season when they saw a vessel at anchor near a rock pile with a dive flag displayed. The officers conducted a resource inspection after observing several spearguns located on the deck and found two undersized gag groupers. The subject was issued a citation for possession of undersized gag grouper.

LEVY COUNTY

Officers Drew and Troiano were patrolling the Bailey Mines Tract of Goethe State Forest after dark when the officers noticed an individual standing on the side of the road in a rural, unlit area. The officers conducted a welfare check and noticed the individual was acting very nervous. The individual was asked if he was in possession of any weapons or illegal items and the individual handed an open hand bag to Officer Drew which contained a syringe with a liquid substance that later tested presumptive positive for methamphetamine. The individual was placed under arrest and booked into the Levy County Jail.

BAKER COUNTY

Officers Burnsed and Fanelli and Reserve Officer Lee were working the night shift in John Bethea State Forest when Officer Burnsed heard a dog barking. With help from

Officer Fanelli and Reserve Officer Lee, they located three pickup trucks on a closed road. The pickup trucks were a hunting party actively pursuing wild hogs with dogs during the closed season. Four individuals were cited for a total of 10 misdemeanors and five infractions.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROL

DUVAL COUNTY

Lieutenant Givens and Officers Read and Geib checked a recreational fishing vessel in federal waters at Mayport Inlet. During the inspection, Officer Geib discovered two red snapper in a live well. Officer Geib issued a federal citation for possession of red snapper during closed season and the case will be turned over to NOAA for prosecution.

Officers Geib and Read conducted an inspection of a fishing vessel and found the three people on board in possession of five red snapper. Officer Read issued a federal citation for possession of red snapper during closed season and the case will be turned over to NOAA for prosecution.

Officers Hughes, Suttles and Read were on water patrol in federal waters aboard the offshore patrol vessel NC Fin Cat. They conducted a marine fisheries inspection of a 26-foot recreational fishing vessel and discovered five undersized gray triggerfish inside the fish box. Officer Hughes issued a federal citation for possession of undersized gray triggerfish and the case will be turned over to NOAA for prosecution.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

BREVARD COUNTY

While on foot patrol at Haulover Canal, Officer Balgo saw three individuals with a canoe along the northwest shoreline. A resource and safety inspection located several undersized sheepshead and safety equipment violations. Citations were issued accordingly.

Officers Balgo, Miller, and Hallsten saw two individuals robbing and molesting a commercial blue crab trap. The individuals were placed into custody and booked into the Brevard County Jail. Citations were issued to both individuals.

Lieutenant Davis and Officer Hallsten were on water patrol in Port Canaveral for the red snapper season. They stopped a vessel to conduct a resource inspection and found five vermilion snapper and two black seabass that were undersized. The operator was issued a notice to appear and a warning for the violations.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

During red snapper season in the Atlantic Ocean, Officers Thomas and Lawrence conducted numerous fisheries inspections in federal waters. Most vessels were found in compliance. Of those vessels found not in compliance, four citations were issued for possession over the bag limit of red snapper and one citation issued for undersized vermilion snapper. Three warnings were issued for undersized black sea bass and two warnings were issued for undersized greater amberjack. After the season closed, one vessel was found to be in possession of red snapper. A citation for possession of red snapper during closed season was issued.

Officer Lawrence was patrolling the Vilano Beach slow speed zone. He stopped a vessel violating the speed zone and saw the operator showing signs of impairment. After performing SFSTs, the operator was arrested for boating under the influence. The operator refused to provide a breath sample at the jail and was issued a civil citation for refusal to submit to a lawful breath test.

MARION COUNTY

Officers Rice and Dias were patrolling Sunnyhill when they saw two subjects walking through a pasture. The subjects were carrying grocery bags containing mushrooms picked from the pasture and said they were taking them home to make tea. The officers seized the mushrooms and issued the subjects notices to appear for removing plant life from water management lands.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

MARION COUNTY

Officer Hargabus and Investigator Sumpter attended the annual Cops, Kids, and Firefighters event in Ocala. The officers partnered with eight other local agencies to put on presentations for over 400 youth campers. The campers learned about the different agencies and saw the variety of equipment they use in their daily functions.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Dalton was on land patrol in the area of Cortez Beach when he stopped and performed a fisheries inspection on a man that had been fishing from the beach. The man had caught an undersized red drum during an executive closure for red tide. He

was cited criminally for possession of red drum during an executive closure and given a written warning for undersized red drum.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer Specialist Bibeau and Officer Bibler stopped a vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection. Officer Specialist Bibeau boarded the vessel and located twenty-seven undersized pompano. All three subjects admitted to catching more than their daily bag limit of pompano. They were issued misdemeanor citations and warnings for the fisheries violations.

POLK COUNTY

Officer Boyer was on land patrol in Saddle Creek Fish Management Area (FMA) when he saw a subject in possession of a cast net in the FMA. Officer Boyer conducted a fisheries inspection and found the subject in possession of several tilapia and one largemouth bass. During the inspection, Officer Boyer learned the subject had an active warrant for failure to appear and he arrested the man. The subject was cited for possession of a cast net in Saddle Creek FMA and possession of game fish with a prohibited fishing device.

Officer Earls was on land patrol of the shoreline of the Peace River in the area of Old Bartow Eagle Lake Road. He encountered a subject throwing a cast net from a bridge. Officer Earls conducted a fisheries inspection and found the subject in possession of a twenty-three-inch snook. The subject was unable to produce identification and was arrested for possession of undersized snook and taking of snook by unlawful method.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

LEE COUNTY

Officer Parker was on patrol in Lee County when she noticed a man sitting in front of his house with a large quantity of bird cages. Upon closer inspection she discovered that the man had seventeen buntings in a small cage. This species is protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and is illegal to possess. Nine indigo buntings and eight painted buntings were seized and transported to the CROW care center for rehabilitation. The subject was cited for violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

PASCO COUNTY

In a planned and directed conservation patrol, multiple FWC officers worked the opening of scallop season. The officers worked with Pasco County Sheriff's Deputies to educate boaters on the importance of safety and the proper use of diver's down equipment. Several inspections resulted in persons being cited for taking over the bag

limit of scallops, improper display of registration numbers and one arrest for boating under the influence.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

Officer Matthews was on patrol near A1A and East Las Olas Blvd. He saw a pick-up truck with a cooler in the bed which had several large fish tails protruding from the cooler. The fish tails appeared to be king mackerel. Officer Matthews followed the truck to Davie and to an alley behind a small supermarket. He saw the truck from a distance and watched an employee exit the market, converse with the truck driver and together they unloaded the cooler of fish into the store. When the truck driver exited the store with his empty cooler, Officer Matthews entered the market and saw eight king mackerel on a scale, which totaled 92.4 pounds. Officer Sellers was called to assist and intercepted the truck as it was departing. Officer Matthews asked the employee about the fish and he produced a receipt showing the purchase from the man in the pick-up truck. The truck driver did not have the proper licensing to sell fish and was cited for misdemeanor bag limit violations pertaining to kingfish, selling saltwater products without a saltwater products license, harvesting restricted species for commercial purposes without a restricted species endorsement and illegal transportation of seafood. The supermarket employee/manager has pending charges of no wholesale license and buying seafood from an unlicensed harvester. The eight kingfish were seized as evidence.

Officers Leathers and Cornell were on water patrol on the Intracoastal Waterway in Hollywood. They saw three personal watercraft operating and the occupants were not wearing personal floatation devices. The officers stopped the vessels to address the violation. The vessels had been rented and the officers followed the watercraft to a Hollywood Marina to speak with the person that rented the vessels. The person did not have the required insurance, did not check to make sure the operators had boater identification cards and did not have the required boating safety signage posted for the operators to view. The occupants of the three personal watercraft were cited for not wearing a personal floatation device. The person who had rented the personal watercraft received criminal notice to appear citations for not having the required insurance, not checking to make sure the operators of the vessels had the required boater identification cards, and for not having the required boating safety signage posted for the operators to view.

A small boat crew from the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Station Fort Lauderdale stopped a vessel on the Intracoastal Waterway near 17th St. Bridge to conduct a boating safety inspection. The operator of the vessel, who was under the age of twenty-one, had been consuming alcoholic beverages. The USCG Crew notified FWC Dispatch

and requested assistance. Lieutenant Brock responded and contacted the USCG Crew and the vessel they had stopped. After interviewing the operator of the vessel, Lieutenant Brock determined him not to be impaired, although he did show signs of having consumed alcohol. Lieutenant Brock requested the operator to provide a breath sample into a Portable Breath Test Instrument. The operator agreed and provided a sample of .057 grams of alcohol per 210 liters of breath. The operator was cited for violating the under twenty-one .02 law. The vessel and occupants were released to the operator's father.

GLADES COUNTY

Investigator Luher completed a year-long investigation targeting environmental crimes, compliance and cleanup for Glades, Hendry and Okeechobee counties. The enforcement action resulted in 63 warnings for various environmental actions from waste tires, used oil and vegetation/mulching operations. Over 5 tons of litter were taken to the landfill and violators were given 30 days for compliance and clean up.

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Hudson saw a vessel entering the Manatee Pocket flying the Bahamian flag with multiple fishing rods displayed on board the vessel. He conducted a fisheries inspection and found the captain to be in possession of 30 bags of skinless fillets. The captain said he had blackfin tuna, yellowfin tuna, and many snapper fillets in the bags. The captain had 96 snapper fillets and 12 tuna fillets for a total of 108 fillets. The Captain was cited accordingly for the following violations: over the bag limit of snapper, possession of skinless snapper fillets, yellowfin tuna not in whole condition, and blackfin tuna not in whole condition.

Officer Hudson was conducting state water patrol in the St. Lucie State Park when he saw an individual on board a construction site platform and a second subject trying to get on board. When the subjects saw the officer, one jumped into the water and the other hid in the construction materials. As Officer Hudson pulled up, the subjects started to swim away from the construction site leaving construction materials and a working platform free floating away from the construction site. The officer retrieved the subjects from the water, and they said they had swam across the ICW to get to the construction site. The subjects were given a notice to appear for criminal mischief.

Officer Brevik was on state water patrol around the St. Lucie River in Stuart when he saw a vessel operating at night without proper navigational lights displayed. During the vessel stop, Officer Brevik determined that the operator was impaired. The operator was arrested and transported to the Martin County Jail for boating under the influence.

Officers Carroll and Brevik were on patrol around the St Lucie River and Ten Cent Bridge. They stopped a vessel that did not have any registration numbers displayed. The operator displayed signs of impairment and was arrested for boating under the influence and transported to the Martin County Jail.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck was on patrol at the Boynton Spillway and saw 4 individuals trespassing on a water management structure. When the subjects began to leave, Officer Brodbeck made contact to address the trespassing violation. While speaking with two of the subjects, the other two fled the area. Officer Brodbeck pursued the fleeing subjects and one subject was apprehended after a short chase. The second subject was able to flee the area by vehicle. Officer Godward, along with officers from Boynton Beach PD arrived on scene as backup. After issuing the appropriate citations and warnings to the three subjects remaining at the spillway, Officer Brodbeck drove to the residence where the vehicle that fled was registered and located subject that fled. After being read Miranda, the subject admitted to fleeing from the officer. Officer Brodbeck issued the subject a criminal citation for resisting arrest, as well as warnings for trespassing, failure to allow inspection, and reckless driving.

Officer Brodbeck received information regarding a dive shop with an undersized and out of season spiny lobster in a fish tank. Upon arrival, the officer discovered a spiny lobster approximately 4 inches in length. The employee of the dive shop stated that they had a permit for the lobster but was unable to produce one. The owners of the dive shop arrived approximately 30 minutes later and were able to produce a Special Activity License, permitting the possession of the lobster. There were numerous violations of the permit conditions including method of harvest, location the lobster was harvested, and false statements. The appropriate enforcement actions were taken.

Officer Brodbeck responded to a complaint regarding subjects on Singer Island in possession of hatchling sea turtles. The officer was able to locate the subjects and discovered a bucket containing 4 hatchling sea turtles. The subjects stated they had been instructed by Loggerhead Marine Life Center to place the hatchlings in the bucket and bring them to the facility for veterinary care. When Officer Brodbeck asked why they were still at the beach, they stated they were unsure of where to bring the turtles. Due to the subjects being from out of state, Officer Brodbeck issued warnings relating to possession of sea turtles and educated the subjects as to the nature of the violation. The turtles were taken by the officer to Loggerhead Marine Life Center.

Captive Wildlife Investigators Howell and Booth responded to a complaint regarding the illegal possession of a raccoon. Upon arrival, they found an individual in possession of a raccoon without the required license. The raccoon was seized and placed at a licensed facility. Three warnings were issued for the illegal possession and related violations.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Investigator Turner was on land patrol working a spillway in Fort Pierce where he had received several complaints of snook being taken out of season. He saw a subject catch a snook and quickly placed it in the trunk of his vehicle and drive away. He conducted a traffic stop a short distance away and located a 30-inch snook in the trunk of the

vehicle. The subject was cited for taking snook out of season and the snook was released alive back into the water.

Captive Wildlife Investigators Toby and Booth, along with Officer Arnold, performed an inspection at a facility licensed to possess raccoons. Six of the raccoons were determined to be obtained illegally. A warning was issued for this violation. The raccoons were seized and placed at a licensed facility.

OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigators Booth and Howell responded to a complaint regarding the illegal possession of a raccoon. Upon arrival, they found an individual in possession of a raccoon without the required license. The racoon was seized and placed at a licensed facility. Three warnings were issued for the illegal possession and related violations.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officers Coscullela and Cartaya were on patrol two miles east of Government Cut. They conducted a fisheries inspection on a vessel and discovered an undersized sailfish measuring 48 inches from the lower jaw to the fork. The captain of the vessel was given a warning for not providing an HSM permit and cited for being in possession of a sailfish less than 63 inches from the lower jaw to the fork.

Officers Bruder, Saavedra, and Presser stopped a vessel actively bully netting in the Virginia Key No Entry Zone on opening night of mini season. During the stop, Officer Presser noticed a stone crab claw protruding from behind the steering console. When asked about the claw, the operator quickly picked up a whole stone crab and threw it in the water. The operator was cited for possession of stone crab during closed season, possession of stone crab in whole condition, and interference with an FWC Officer.

Officers Osorio and Cosculluela were on water patrol and responded to a BOLO given by Officer R. Perez and Inv. W. Almagro while on air patrol. The BOLO was in reference to several vessels with divers actively lobstering in the lobster sanctuary. Officer Osorio and Cosculluela contacted four vessels in the area. The contact resulted in education to the public about the lobster sanctuary as well as six misdemeanor arrests for violation of lobster sanctuary and possession of undersized spiny lobster.

Officers Osorio and A. Perez were patrolling Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park. They saw a vessel docked at the No Name Harbor with one person in the water actively harvesting spiny lobster. A fisheries inspection to the vessel revealed eight undersized spiny lobsters. A citation was issued to address the violation.

While on land-based water patrol in Bear Cut, Officer Presser saw two individuals actively fishing just north of the bridge. A resource inspection revealed an 11" mutton snapper hidden in a plastic bag. One of the subjects claimed possession of the snapper and was cited for possession of undersized mutton snapper.

Officers Osorio, Perez, and Cartaya were just south of Soldiers Key when they approached a vessel actively engaged in fishing. Upon approach, a subject tossed one undersized hogfish into the water. The hogfish was recovered, and the subject was cited for undersized hogfish and interference of an FWC officer.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Landa was inspecting a vessel while working mini lobster season. The operator of the vessel had a felony warrant for his arrest. Investigator Nelson arrested the subject on the outstanding warrant and issued a warning for a navigational violation. Officer Gomez assisted on this incident.

MONROE COUNTY

Investigator Mattson and Officer Mobley were on unmarked water patrol when they saw a towel on the rocks near the north end of Channel 5 bridge. They saw a submerged dive flag and a black bag containing two lobster. Two men came down the hill to question why someone was messing with their belongings. Investigator Mattson identified himself as FWC Law Enforcement and one of the subjects walked towards the bag hidden in the rocks. Inspection of the bag revealed 22 lobster. The men admitted to catching the lobster and not measuring them. In total there were 24 lobster, 12 which were undersized. Officer Mobley cited each man with 12 counts of undersize lobster and 1 count of over the bag limit. The men were taken to Plantation Key Jail by Lieutenant Lyne and an MCSO deputy.

Officer's Sapp and Cobb were conducting water patrol near Sawyer Key before the start of lobster mini-season. They saw a vessel bully netting in a nearby flat and conducted a vessel stop. A marine resource inspection revealed eight lobster onboard the vessel before the lobster mini-season start time. The vessel operator was issued a notice to appear for taking lobster out of season. The spiny lobster were returned alive to the water.

A plain clothes FWC officer noticed a man crossing US1 near mile marker 62 holding a speargun and a red cooler. Snook tails appeared to be protruding from within. The man ran down the southern embankment to the water's edge and put the red cooler into the bed of his pickup truck. Officer Tafoya arrived as backup and asked to look in the coolers in the bed of his truck. Inside the red cooler were two snook. The subject admitted to spearing both snook after he could not find any lobster. The snook were out of season, had been speared, and one was undersized. The catch was also over the daily bag limit of snook. The man was placed under arrest and booked into Marathon Jail.

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Conroy and Arbogast were conducting plain clothes operations, assisting Officer Stearns during resource inspections. Officer Conroy and Arbogast were atop the Duck Key Bridge and saw Officer Stearns check two individuals fishing along the shoreline. As Officer Stearns walked away, the two individuals appeared to be nervous, keeping Officer Stearns in view. Officers Conroy and Arbogast asked Officer Stearns to drive away and they continued to watch the men fishing from a distance. When Officer Stearns drove away, one of the individuals uncovered a large quantity of fish from underneath a pile of seaweed and relocated them to another area. Officer Stearns returned to conduct a second inspection which revealed 11 undersized schoolmaster snapper. The individuals were cited for the violations.

While conducting water patrol, Officers Oldsen and Thurkettle, along with the United States Coast Guard, conducted a resource inspection on a vessel. Three of the five lobster aboard were undersized. A citation was issued and the undersized lobster were returned to the water.

Officer Oldsen noticed a gate unsecured at a construction site near Vaca Cut. He saw a male swimming in the water and two males on shore. The person swimming was in possession of eight spiny lobster, two over the daily bag limit. The subject was cited for diving at night during mini season and over the daily bag limit.

Officers Yurewitch, Kleis, and Curbelo were on water patrol near Vaca Cut when they saw a vessel returning from fishing in the Atlantic. The officers conducted a resource inspection and found multiple boating safety violations and undersized dolphin. The officers issued the appropriate citations for the violations.

While on water patrol near Sunshine Key Resort, Officers Yurewitch, Kleis, and Curbelo saw an individual filleting undersized banded rudderfish. The officers approached the individual and conducted a resource inspection. In addition to the fish being filleted, the officers found an additional five undersized banded rudderfish in a cooler next to the subject. A second person arrived and claimed that he had caught and kept all the fish. The officers issued the appropriate citations.

Officers Yurewitch and Kleis were on water patrol near the Seven Mile Bridge when they noticed a small fishing vessel with three people on board. The officers saw a substantial amount of fishing equipment and dead bait on the deck of the vessel. The officers conducted a resource inspection and found they were over the vessel limit for great barracuda. The officers learned that one of the individuals caught 5 of the fish, putting that person over the daily bag limit of 2 barracuda. The appropriate citations were issued.

Officer Reams was on land patrol in Picayune Strand State Forest when he was flagged down by an individual. He told Officer Reams he saw two men driving on non-designated trails in the area and they were fishing in the water management pump

house holding lakes. Officer Reams located the individuals fishing. They had clearly driven off trail to get to the location they were fishing. Officer Reams issued citations and warnings accordingly.

While working with the United States Coast Guard, Officer Conroy conducted a vessel stop for a safety and resource inspection. During the resource inspection, Officer Conroy saw multiple lobster and diving gear. Officer Conroy asked the owner to open a cooler that appeared to be used for drinks and food and located a zip lock bag with 2 small red grouper fillets. The vessel owner was cited appropriately.

Officer Polly was on land patrol when he saw a person actively cast netting in a freshwater canal. When asked to produce his fishing license, he presented an expired freshwater fishing license. Officer Polly inspected a nearby bucket and located three black bass and one mayan cichlid. Freshwater game fish may only be taken by hook and line, or rod and reel. The subject was cited accordingly.

While conducting patrol during mini season, Officers Conroy and Stearns were performing vessel stops at a boat ramp. A vessel pulled up with lobster on board. The officers measured the lobster and determined there were 12 undersized out of 42 lobster. Two subjects were cited accordingly, and the lobster were returned to the water.

Officers Knutson and Araujo responded to a call of a vessel that capsized near Johnston Key. The officers, along with the help of a good Samaritan vessel, secured the occupants of the boat in distress by transferring them to the officer's vessel. After insuring there were no injuries, the occupants were transported to a family members vessel and taken to shore.

Officers aboard the Offshore Patrol Vessel CT Randall heard a distress call of a diver that was threatened with a firearm by a diver from another vessel. The aggressor had threatened the victim, claiming he would take action with a firearm over a domestic disturbance of a lobster "honey-hole." Officers Wagner, Araujo and Knutson responded and confirmed there were no firearms on the vessel and that the diving location is on a first come basis. The officers advised the aggressor that he could not threaten other divers. The officers also spoke with the victims who had left the area to remove themselves from the aggressor.

Officers Araujo, Wagner and Knutson were on water patrol near Nile's Channel Bridge and noticed a vessel with 6 divers lobstering near the rip-rap of the bridge. When the officers initiated a resource inspection, two of the divers had a lobster bag full of lobster. Officer Knutson located 19 lobster, 17 of which were undersized. The divers did not have a measuring device. The divers admitted to catching all the lobster in the bag and not having a measuring device with them. Both divers were placed under arrest for possession of undersized lobster, over the bag limit, and not possessing a measuring device in the water. They were transported to the Stock Island Jail in Key West, Florida.

Officers Kleis and Yurewitch were on night patrol when they saw a vessel operating without navigation lights. The officers stopped the vessel to address the violation and noticed fishing and diving equipment on board. The subjects stated that lobster were on board in the live well. Officer Kleis measured the lobster and found that two were undersized. Further inspection of the coolers revealed a plastic bag containing 2 undersized hogfish. The subjects were cited for possession of undersized lobster and undersized hogfish.

Officer Kleis and Yurewitch were on night patrol and heard the United States Coast Guard call for assistance on a vessel stop. USCG stated that they stopped a vessel that had lobster on board, and the occupants were refusing to identify themselves. Upon arrival, Officers Kleis and Yurewitch were able to identify the 4 subjects on board. Three were juveniles. The juveniles were dry, and the adult was wet, as if he had been in the water diving. The adult was also the operator of the vessel and displayed multiple signs of impairment. After field sobriety exercises, the operator was arrested for Boating Under the Influence with a minor on board. Officer Yurewitch measured and counted the lobster and found a total of 28, 15 of which were undersized. The adult operator of the vessel admitted to catching and keeping the lobster. Other charges included, possession of over the bag limit of lobster, possession of 15 undersized lobster, and multiple citations for other violations. The juveniles were transported back to the USCG Marathon station and released to parents. The vessel operator was booked into the Monroe County Jail.

Officers Wagner, Araujo and Bell were on patrol near Sawyer Key and initiated a resource inspection on two vessels that were harvesting spiny lobster. Upon inspection the officers located 11 lobster on the deck of the vessel – two were undersized. In a cooler of the neighboring vessel which was registered to one of the divers, there were 3 undersized lobsters. The subject was cited for five undersized lobster.

Captive Wildlife Investigators Alford and Toby inspected a facility licensed to sell birds. Caging and sanitation violations were documented. One misdemeanor and one warning were issued for the violations.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officers Perez and Cartaya held a lobster mini season workshop at a local West Marine to help educate the participating public on how to safely engage in the sport. They emphasized the legal methods of harvest which included not taking egg bearing or undersized lobster, and that all lobsters are measured in the water and kept in whole condition. The Biscayne National Park lobster sanctuary boundary maps were also made available to the public.

The Youth Hunting Program of Florida coordinated with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Youth Python Round-up. Python action team members and members of the SFWMD educated the next generation of python hunters. After a crash course in removing pythons, the young participants removed four of the invasive snakes in a single night. Jerry Krenz with SFWMD did an excellent job in bringing all the partners together to make it happen. FWC's Robert Edman conducted the training on Burmese python identification, behavior, and handling. FWC Officers Hart and Washington discussed laws concerning the removal of pythons and provided photos of the training. This was a great educational opportunity for both young and old to learn more about the Everglades and the importance of removing the invasive Burmese pythons.

COLLIER COUNTY

Lieutenant Bulger represented FWC at the meeting of the Miami Chapter of Safari Club International in Doral. The Miami Chapter of Safari Club International has partnered with FWC in recent years to promote conservation and hunting in Florida. At the meeting Chapter President Jonathan Horowitz and Chapter Vice President Marcos Del Toro presented FWC with a donation of flat tire repair kits. Kits like these are especially useful to FWC officers working in the woods and on deployment during hurricane responses.

Lieutenant Bulger and Officer Stearns were invited to attend Public Safety Day at Starbucks Coffee in Naples. The officers represented FWC along with the Collier County Sheriff's Office deputies, Collier County firefighters, and Collier County EMS. Numerous families attended the event and children had a chance to see patrol vehicles, firetrucks, and ambulances.

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Dube appeared on several radio shows regarding the "lobster mini-season" wrap up. Officer Dube discussed FWC's arrests and the lobster cases that were made during the 48-hour period. Officer Dube also highlighted the many calls for service such as missing divers, boating accidents and various other complaints handled by FWC.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Polly responded to Heritage Bay Golf Community about a report of an injured deer. When Officer Polly arrived, he discovered an adult white tail doe with severe injuries to her back and rear legs, probably resulting from a vehicle strike. Officer Polly humanely euthanized the deer. It was turned over to FWC biologists to further their sampling of deer for the ongoing Chronic Wasting Disease study.