

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report



Patrol, Protect, Preserve

August 16, 2019 through August 29, 2019

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 T. Basford was working the area known as North Shore when he noticed a couple of vehicles parked on the shoulder of the road. He later saw two individuals coming towards the vehicles with fishing gear. Officer Basford conducted a resource inspection and found the two men to be in possession of two redfish. One individual admitted to catching both fish. He was issued a citation for possession of over daily bag limit of redfish.

GADSDEN COUNTY

Lieutenant Holcomb passed a truck with a single passenger sitting on the side of the road with the window down. He conducted a welfare check and found the individual in possession of a loaded 30-30 rifle and an empty corn bag in the cab of the truck. Further investigation led to locating corn scattered along the roadway shoulders adjacent to the individual's truck. The individual admitted to placing the corn along the roadway and was cited accordingly.

GULF COUNTY

Officers T. Basford and Wicker observed a vessel in the Gulf County Canal near the Highland View Bridge and conducted a resource inspection. During the inspection Officer Basford located several fish fillets which were determined to be redfish,

sheepshead and black drum. The captain of the vessel was issued citations for the violation of fish not being landed in whole condition.

Officer McMillion inspected a group coming into shore after harvesting scallops on Port St. Joe Bay. A resource inspection revealed violations pertaining to the daily bag limit of bay scallops and the appropriate citation was issued.

Officer Gerber was on patrol at White City Boat Ramp conducting resource and boating safety inspections. He observed a vessel with two individuals approaching the ramp and the operator appeared to be impaired. Resource and boating safety violations were found and cited appropriately, and the operator was arrested for boating under the influence.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Specialist Corbin saw a subject fishing from shore and conducted an inspection. A check with dispatch revealed the subject had two active warrants out of Okaloosa County and Wisconsin. The subject was placed under arrest for the warrants.

Officer Specialist Corbin and Officer Nelson were on water patrol when they saw a vessel returning to the Destin Pass with fishing equipment displayed. A vessel stop was conducted and one undersized cobia, two undersized gag grouper, and an out of season red snapper were located in a fish box. The owner of the vessel was unable to provide the registration and stated he had purchased it in May. The title had not been transferred and a notice to appear citation was issued. Another subject on the vessel claimed responsibility for catching and keeping the undersized fish and was cited appropriately.

Officer Specialist Corbin and Officer Nelson conducted a vessel stop for violation of an idle speed/no wake zone. The operator showed several signs of impairment and field sobriety tasks were conducted. He refused to provide a breath sample and was arrested for BUI.

Officer Specialist Corbin and Officer Nelson saw two subjects fishing from shore. A resource inspection revealed undersized redfish and a stone crab located in a cooler. An undersized bluefish and an undersized mangrove snapper were in another cooler in their vehicle. Neither subject had a valid saltwater fishing license and the appropriate citations were issued.

WAKULLA COUNTY

Officer Carr and Officer Specialist Mallow saw a vessel underway displaying a diver down flag. They conducted a boating safety inspection and the operator showed signs of possible impairment. Seated Field Sobriety Tasks were administered, and the operator was arrested for BUI and refusal to submit to a lawful breath sample.

WALTON COUNTY

Officers White and Bradshaw were patrolling Choctawhatchee Bay near the mouth of the Mitchell River and saw a light being displayed from a vessel in a manner commonly used for flounder gigging. An inspection of the vessel revealed bass and blue crab that had been gigged. The owner of the vessel also had multiple boating safety violations. The subject was cited for taking freshwater game fish and blue crab by an illegal method and an insufficient number of personal flotation devices. He was verbally warned for other boating safety violations.

Officers Letcher, Tison, and Parrish were patrolling the Choctawhatchee River when they stopped a vessel where the occupants were setting bush hooks. An inspection revealed freshwater game fish (bream) being used for baiting the bush hooks. Some of the bush hooks previously baited were checked and it was determined they had been baited with bream. The bush hooks were also not properly marked. One of the subjects was cited for using game fish as bait and issued a warning for failure to properly mark the bush hooks.

Officer Bradshaw was patrolling the Choctawhatchee River during the first phase of the 2019 Public Alligator Hunt. A vessel check was conducted on subjects hunting alligator and a license check revealed the permit issued was for the third phase. The subject was cited for hunting alligators out of his assigned phase.

Officer White was on water patrol on the Choctawhatchee River when he saw two subjects in a vessel pulling in what appeared to be a line. The subjects were questioned about their activity which revealed they were using a shocking system to take fish. Both subjects were cited for taking freshwater game fish by an illegal method.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Officers Parrish and Gore were patrolling inside the Econfina Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Washington County. Two subjects were checked for compliance with the alligator season rules and were cited for knowingly hunting out of an assigned or approved area (the WMA).

Officers Letcher, Parrish, and Tison were patrolling the Choctawhatchee River and stopped a vessel for no navigational lights. When the officers approached, an occupant on the bow of the vessel discarded something into the water. The subjects were using a shocking method to take freshwater fish. The subject admitted to discarding a wire used for the shocking system. The occupants on the vessel were cited for taking freshwater gamefish by an illegal method and one was cited for interference with an FWC Officer.

Officers Letcher, Parrish, and Tison stopped a vessel for no navigational lights and saw a rifle, spotlight, and frogs in the vessel. One of the occupants stated he had shot the frogs with the rifle and light and was cited for taking amphibians by an illegal method at night.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Allgood conducted an inspection on a vessel returning to the Pensacola Pass. The subject claimed he had caught two “Jacks” but did not know what type they were. Officer Allgood inspected his catch and found two undersized greater amberjack. The individual was cited for the violation.

Officer Specialist McHenry received a complaint that an individual fishing at the Bob Sikes Bridge was in possession of an oversized red drum. Officer Specialist McHenry responded to the area and found the subject in possession of a 35-inch red drum. The size limit on a red drum is from 18 to 27 inches. Officer Specialist McHenry also noticed the individual was impaired and requested Officer Specialist Ramos to assist. After a brief investigation, it was discovered that the individual was in possession of crack cocaine. Officer Specialist McHenry arrested the individual and transported him to the Escambia County Jail. He was cited for possession of crack cocaine and possession of an oversized red drum.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Specialist P. Rockwell and Officer J. Rockwell attended a Boy Scout event at Anderson Pond in Eglin Waste Management Area (WMA). Officer J. Rockwell brought his patrol vessel and displayed all his safety gear and registration. The officers explained the importance of each piece of equipment and safety gear. The scouts interacted with them as they shared life events they experienced on the job. There were 40 Scouts ranging in age from 6–14 years old with a total of 54 participants including parents.

Officers Homan and Yates assisted Washington County Sheriff’s Office and other state agencies with the “Back to School Bash” event in the New Hope / Vernon area. The officers set up static displays with trucks and a vessel. The officers handed out pamphlets to the youth and parents and gave tours of FWC equipment during the four-hour event.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

BAKER COUNTY

Officer Burnsed and K-9 Officer Gill responded to a complaint about a suspicious vehicle parked on the side of SR 2. Officer Gill deployed K-9 Friar and soon found a

small amount of blood on the ground. While continuing the search of the wooded area, K-9 Friar located a hidden and loaded .22 caliber rifle. The officers located two suspects and obtained confessions to shooting at a deer and hiding the rifle. Charges for taking deer with gun and light, out of season, and by Illegal method along with hunting from roadway will be filed with the state attorney's office.

BRADFORD COUNTY

K-9 Officer Gill and K-9 Friar were requested by the Starke Police Department to search for a firearm used in a murder. Officer Gill deployed K-9 Friar in an area that was overgrown with vegetation and located the firearm after a short search.

HAMILTON COUNTY

Hamilton County Sheriff's deputies contacted Officer Nichols after locating a disabled pickup. The rear bumper and bed of the truck were covered with fresh blood and deer hair. Five suspects were located and interviewed. The suspects confessed to taking a deer earlier that night. A rifle and deer meat were recovered and seized as evidence. Charges will be filed with the state attorney's office for taking deer at night/during closed season.

LEVY COUNTY

Officers Starling and Lieutenant Johnston discovered a large pile of household trash dumped on private property near Inglis. The officers located an address on a document and Officer Starling went to the location and interviewed the homeowner. Officer Starling was provided receipts from Advantage Waste Services in Hernando Beach by the homeowner who explained she rented a roll off dumpster from the company and paid them to haul off the trash. Lieutenant Johnston and Officer Starling went to Advantage Waste Services and the driver admitted to dumping the contents on the private property. Commercial charges are pending with the state attorney's office.

Officers Bell and Fox patrolled the Suwannee River and the Levy County coastline targeting illegal alligator hunting activity. They noticed subjects in a vessel shining a light at the mouth of East Pass 2½ miles into Levy County. An inspection of the vessel found the subjects in possession of multiple tools traditionally used for the taking of alligator. One of the subjects had a Dixie County CITES tag for the alligator hunt. Officer Fox cited the subject for hunting alligator in the wrong zone.

DUVAL COUNTY

Officer Sweat witnessed a pickup truck driving in the wrong lane of US Highway 17 and conducted a traffic stop. The operator displayed signs of impairment and field sobriety tasks were administered. The operator was arrested and submitted breath samples of 0.243 and 0.238.

NASSAU COUNTY

Officer Sweat located an illegal dump site at a hunt club lease gate near Kolar's Ferry Road in northern Nassau County. The debris included several cans, dog food bags, a mattress and other household items. Officer Sweat contacted a potential subject and obtained a confession. A citation was issued for littering and the subject agreed to clean up the area.

CITRUS COUNTY

Officer Suttles saw a vessel operating on a full plane within feet of numerous divers and a boat at anchor with a dive flag displayed. The officer conducted a stop of the vessel and issued a citation for reckless operation. All divers were accounted for and there were no injuries.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer Specialist Yates saw a Florida Department of Agriculture Officer away from the Inspection Station with a vehicle stopped northbound on State Road 6. He provided backup, assisting Officer Goble (FDACS) in his investigation of the vehicle. Five individuals involved in the illegal harvest and transport of over 2,100 pounds of saw palmetto berries were apprehended. The berries were seized, and charges were filed with the local state attorney's office.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Officer Fowler saw a driver of a vehicle using headlights in order to locate deer from the county highway. Officer Fowler stopped the vehicle and located multiple firearms. The driver admitted to shining deer and was cited for attempting to take deer with a gun and light at night.

CLAY COUNTY

Officers E. Barber and J. Barber followed up on a Wildlife Alert tip involving violations occurring on the first night of alligator hunting season. They saw a subject place illegally baited bush hooks and later return to check the bait. The officers approached the subject and he admitted to the violations and knowing his actions were illegal. He was cited for two misdemeanors for hunting alligators using an illegal method and placing bush hooks.

Officer R. Colasanti saw a vessel without proper navigation lights and conducted a vessel stop to address the violation. The operator was attempting to harvest shrimp and was displaying signs of impairment. The operator was arrested for BUI. A records check found the subject had two prior DUI arrests within the past 10 years which raised this BUI arrest to a felony violation. The man was transported and booked into the Clay County Jail where he refused to submit to a breath test.

Officer R. Colasanti saw a vehicle pass him at a high rate of speed while swerving and committing several traffic violations. He conducted a traffic stop and saw signs of impairment from the operator. An Orange Park PD officer arrived to assist and the subject was arrested and transported to the Clay County Jail where she refused to submit to a breath test.

Lieutenant Haney saw a vessel returning to the boat ramp with no navigation lights displayed. He conducted an inspection and saw signs of impairment from the operator. The operator was arrested for BUI and a records check revealed he had 3 prior convictions for DUI, which raised the BUI arrest to a felony violation. The subject was transported to Clay County Jail where he refused to submit to a breath test.

Officer Colasanti and Lieutenant Haney stopped a vessel violating a no wake zone at a high rate of speed. They saw signs of impairment from the operator and conducted a BUI investigation. The operator was arrested and transported to the Clay County Jail where he provided a breath sample of .147.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

MADISON COUNTY

Officer Ransom participated in the law enforcement portion of a hunter safety course. This course allows participants to learn and interact with conservation law enforcement on hunting safety topics. Numerous questions were answered on matters of conservation enforcement, public safety and various hunting issues. Approximately 28 participants attended the course.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Lieutenant Humphries and Officer Boone responded to a request for assistance from the Lafayette County Sheriff's Office on a possible overdue boater. A truck and trailer had been left at a local ramp for several days and there was concern for the individual's safety. Upon responding to the area and checking with the local state parks, the missing individual was discovered to have camped along the Suwannee River. The subject returned safely to the boat ramp and the Lafayette County Sheriff Office was notified of the subject's safe return.

DUVAL COUNTY

Officers Culbreth and Mandrick were in the area of the ICW and the St. Johns River when they saw a person in the water struggling to swim towards a nearby vessel at anchor against the strong current. The person made no headway against the outgoing

current and quickly became distressed. They carefully navigated their patrol vessel near the distressed swimmer and pulled him onboard. The swimmer was extremely exhausted and said he had jumped off his vessel after dropping a pair of pliers and a flounder overboard. He recovered and was safely transported back to his vessel.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Officer Lawrence conducted a boating inspection on a personal watercraft in St. Augustine Inlet. The operator displayed signs of impairment and Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks were conducted. The operator was arrested for boating under the influence.

Officer Thomas received a tip that the red drum were beginning to run at Guana Dam. She conducted numerous fisheries inspections to address the violation of over the bag limit of red drum. She issued four misdemeanor citations for over the bag limit of red drum and two misdemeanor citations for undersized red drum.

Officer Thomas investigated a boating accident involving a capsized vessel. St John's County Fire Rescue rescued four subjects just north of St Augustine Inlet who were seen clinging to their vessel. The vessel flipped over after taking on a big wave. All subjects were safe and uninjured.

BREVARD COUNTY

Officer Kearney saw a man fishing from the shoreline and conducted a resource inspection. The subject stated he had a red drum on a stringer in the water but was not sure if it was of legal size. A measurement of the fish revealed the redfish was 30 inches in length, well over the 27-inch maximum legal length. A citation was issued for the violation.

Officer Summers was on land patrol of the TM Goodwin – Broadmoor Unit Waterfowl Management Area during the statewide alligator hunt. Officer Summers saw an individual cast and hook up to an alligator. The subject was hunting outside of his alligator harvest unit and was cited for attempting to take alligators outside the specified area of the alligator harvest permit.

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Officer Marroquin saw a jet ski operating in a reckless manner and conducted a stop to address the violation. The operator was showing signs of impairment and Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks were administered. The operator was arrested and booked at the

Indian River County Jail for boating under the influence, reckless operation of a vessel, and refusal to submit to a lawful breath test.

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY / ORANGE COUNTY

The Northeast Region Investigations Section closed out a covert operation called “Tight Lines” which targeted businesses in Indian River and Orange Counties that were unlawfully dealing in saltwater fish and wild game. Five individuals at four businesses were cited in this case for unlawfully purchasing saltwater products and dealing in wild game. All defendants plead no contest which resulted in adjudications on 13 counts involving the unlawful purchase of saltwater products, the unlawful purchase of snook by a dealer, unlawful purchase of snook, and the unlawful possession of whitetail deer during the closed season. The final disposition resulted in a combined \$6,727.00 in fines and cost of investigation (COI). The COI in most of these cases will be deposited in the Wildlife Alert fund. All dispositions in this case have been presented to FWC’s Marine Fisheries Office so additional civil penalties can be assessed.

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Lieutenant Trusley and Officer Stelzer received an anonymous tip regarding a subject collecting American alligator eggs on a lake in Osceola County. Lieutenant Trusley and Officer Stelzer found the subject in possession of a total of 34 alligator eggs. The subject was arrested and booked into Osceola County Jail.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer Cornell was checking subjects leaving the south jetty at Ponce De Leon Inlet in New Smyrna Beach. One subject was issued the criminal notice to appear for possessing under the legal-size limit of mangrove snapper. Another subject was issued a criminal notice to appear for possessing under the legal-size limit of sheepshead.

MARION COUNTY

Officers Rice and Dias received information about persons intentionally hitting deer with vehicles and keeping them. The officers were provided with a picture that was posted on social media of a subject posing with a six-point buck that was still in velvet. Officers Rice, Dias, and Simpson identified multiple suspects and conducted interviews. The subjects confessed that the person in the social media hit the deer late at night with a vehicle and brought it back to a residence to process. The subject buried the deer because he knew it was not deer season. The officers found the deer remains and matched it to the picture on social media. The information was presented to the Marion County State Attorney’s Office and a warrant was issued for possession of a deer during closed season.

Officers Rice and Dias saw a vessel coming back to a ramp late at night with three subjects on board. They contacted the vessel occupants to conduct a boating and

resource check. There were multiple full beers in a cooler on the vessel. All three subjects were under the age of 21. The vessel owner was issued a notice to appear for possession of alcohol by person under the age of 21.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

CHARLOTTE, LEE, AND SARASOTA COUNTIES

Officers from Charlotte, Lee and Sarasota Counties participated in MADD Saturation Saturday to deter boating under the influence. Officers stopped 56 vessels and contacted 180 people. During their inspections, officers conducted sobriety exercises on six people and made two arrests for boating under the influence. One juvenile was issued a criminal citation for a .02 B.A.C. violation and five people were issued warnings for possession of alcohol by a minor. A total of 17 boating citations and 36 warnings were issued.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Perry conducted a resource inspection on a van inside a local management area. Officer Stasko arrived on scene to assist and remained with the van while Officer Perry looked around the area. A few people were located picking palmetto berries and bags of berries were hidden in the woods. The officers issued six misdemeanor citations for taking palmetto berries from the management area, seven infractions for daily use permit violations and six warnings for violations relating to required permits for harvesting palmetto berries.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Officer Smith was patrolling an area in Highlands County known to have high activity for saw palmetto berry pickers. While travelling along a backroad, Officer Smith noticed a pickup truck moving slowly in the middle of the road and then stop. Officer Smith saw two large bags which contained 234 pounds of saw palmetto berries. The subject did not have a valid permit to possess saw palmetto berries and was cited accordingly.

LEE COUNTY

Officer Winton was on patrol on Pine Island when he saw a vehicle parked near a property known for unlawful palmetto berry picking. Officer Winton approached the vehicle, located a subject actively harvesting palmetto berries, and another transporting the berries to the vehicle. Neither subject had a permit for their activities. Both were issued notices to appear for the violation.

Officer Winton was on patrol on Pine Island when he saw a subject attempt to evade him on property containing a large amount of saw palmettos. Officer Winton located the subject who had harvested a large quantity of palmetto berries without landowner permission or a permit. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officer Winton was on patrol on Pine Island when he saw a vehicle make several U-turns in unusual locations. Concerned that the subjects were lost, Officer Winton approached the vehicle to offer assistance. He discovered the vehicle contained multiple bags of saw palmetto berries and the driver did not have a permit for the transportation of the berries. Appropriate citations were issued.

Officer Stanley was on water patrol in Estero Bay when he performed a marine fisheries inspection on an inbound vessel. The inspection revealed two undersized mutton snapper and several undersized lane snapper. The operator and passenger were issued appropriate citations.

Officers Gray and Price saw a vessel operating on plane in a manatee zone and conducted a vessel stop. The operator appeared to be impaired and field sobriety exercises were utilized. The operator was arrested for boating under the influence and transported to the Lee County Jail where he refused to provide a breath sample.

MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Gonzales, Officer Dalton and Lieutenant Hinds were on water patrol near the south Skyway Bridge in Manatee County. They stopped and performed a fisheries inspection on an individual they saw cast netting around the bridge. The officers found that the man had caught and kept undersized sheepshead fish as well as several undersized, out of season and whole condition stone crabs. The individual was given a criminal citation for possession of stone crabs out of season and several written warnings.

Officer Gonzales and Lieutenant Hinds were on water patrol in the area of Cortez Bridge in Manatee County. They stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel violating the Slow Speed Zone in that area. The operator of the vessel was showing signs of being under the influence and sobriety tasks were utilized. The operator was arrested for boating under the influence and was taken to the Manatee County Jail.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer Specialist Bibeau saw an individual loading fishing gear into a vehicle. He contacted the individual to conduct a fisheries inspection. Officer Specialist Bibeau found the individual to be in possession of four undersized permit. The subject was cited for possession of undersized permit and received a warning for being over the daily bag limit of permit.

Officer Specialist Bibeau stopped a vessel returning from offshore and conducted a fisheries inspection. He located three undersized and out of season red snapper along with an undersized vermilion snapper. Appropriate citations were issued accordingly.

Officer Conrad saw an individual spearfishing in Blind Pass, St. Pete Beach. The individual was found to be in possession of six undersized sheepshead and was cited appropriately.

POLK COUNTY

Officer Adams checked on an illegal campsite he had previously located on Walk-in-Water Wildlife Management Area that was being utilized for illegal palmetto berry harvesting activity. He found a subject sleeping in a makeshift tent along with piles of palmetto berry stalks and numerous palmetto berries lying on the ground. Officer Adams woke the subject, who admitted to picking palmetto berries as well as camping there illegally. Dispatch said the subject had an outstanding warrant in Polk County for violation of probation. Officer Carter arrived on scene and assisted Officer Adams with searching the campsite. Officer Carter located a small amount of methamphetamine and related drug paraphernalia. Officer Adams transported the subject to the Polk County Jail where he was booked for his outstanding warrant and charged additionally for possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia, illegal harvest of palmetto berries and camping in an undesignated area.

SARASOTA COUNTY

Officer Brown, Officer Chesney and Lieutenant Hinds were on water patrol near Blackburn Point Bridge in Sarasota County. They stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel violating the Manatee Slow Speed Zone in that area. The operator of the vessel was showing signs of impairment and sobriety tasks were utilized. The operator was arrested for boating under the influence and taken to the Sarasota County Jail.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Davidson, Officer Gonzales and Officer Dalton were working a directed conservation detail in Manatee County targeting alligator hunting. The officers performed a boating safety and fisheries inspection on a vessel that was alligator hunting. The operator of the vessel was cited for actively alligator hunting in an area where he did not have a permit.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

Officer Grant and Lieutenant Brock were on water patrol when they saw several subjects fishing from the docks at Cox's Landing. A check of the subjects' catch revealed that one of them had harvested seven mangrove snapper. The same subject also did not have a valid shoreline fishing license. The subject received a criminal notice to appear for harvesting over the bag limit of mangrove snapper and a citation for not having a valid shoreline saltwater fishing license. Two mangrove snapper were seized as evidence.

Officer Seldomridge responded to Cox's Landing in Fort Lauderdale on a tip that someone was harvesting undersized mangrove snapper. At the boat ramp, Officer Seldomridge contacted a fishing subject in possession of eleven mangrove snapper. Nine of the mangrove snapper were undersized. The subject received a citation for harvesting over the bag limit and undersized mangrove snapper.

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Hudson was on state water patrol when he saw an individual fishing underneath the Stuart Causeway. The subject was in possession of five undersized lane snapper and was cited accordingly.

Officer Hudson was on state water patrol when he conducted a fisheries inspection on a vessel fishing underneath the Stuart Causeway. During the inspection, a separate vessel saw the officer and began to pack up and leave the area quickly. Officer Hudson conducted a stop on that vessel and found the operator in possession of two bonefish. Bonefish is a catch and release species. The subject had previously been warned and educated by FWC for possessing illegal fish. Appropriate citations were written.

Officer Carroll was on patrol in Savannah State Park due to a report of agricultural violations that occurred the previous night. Officer Carroll saw two subjects with palmetto berries in the back of a vehicle in the Jensen Beach Boulevard parking lot. Officer Carroll cited both subjects for evading state park fees and for not having a permit for the berries.

Officers Brevik and Carroll were in the area of Dupuis Wildlife Environmental Area (WEA) when they conducted a stop on a vehicle. The passengers were found to be illegally harvesting saw palmetto berries from the environmental area without a permit. The subjects were appropriately cited for the violations.

Lieutenant Hayes asked for an FWC flight over Hungryland Wildlife Environmental Area (WEA) in search of saw palmetto berry pickers. The pilot located nine vehicles scattered throughout the area, saw several white bags commonly known for holding harvested palmetto berries and could see individuals in the woods. The subjects were checked and found to be in the country illegally. Customs & Border Patrol (CBP) was contacted

and they arrived on scene. After interviewing the subjects that could not provide identification, CPB took 27 individuals into custody for processing.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck responded to a late night complaint in Jupiter regarding individuals actively fishing for and keeping a large number of snook out-of-season. The officer arrived on scene and contacted two subjects matching the provided description. Both subjects denied catching and keeping any snook. A search of the immediate area revealed 14 snook, 13 of which were undersized. The subjects were arrested for harvesting out-of-season and undersized snook. The subjects received additional charges from the Jupiter Police Department for trespassing on FEC railroad property.

Investigator Patterson and Officer Brodbeck were on vessel patrol near Peanut Island when they saw a personal watercraft (PWC) operating at a high speed near swimmers. The vessel also had improperly displayed registration numbers and an improperly displayed decal. A stop was initiated to address the violations and the operator appeared to be impaired. Seated Field Sobriety Tasks were utilized, and the operator was arrested for BUI. The subject refused to provide a breath sample and was booked into the Palm Beach County Jail.

Officer Brodbeck, along with Officer Morrow, Investigator Patterson, and Lieutenant Brock, saw the driver of a pickup truck and trailer repeatedly strike another trailer and a tree while attempting to maneuver at Phil Foster Park. Officer Morrow and Investigator Patterson contacted the driver to address the issue and found him to be possibly impaired. Field Sobriety Tasks were utilized, and the driver was arrested for DUI. The subject refused to provide a breath sample and was transported to the Palm Beach County Jail.

Officer Brodbeck saw a vessel with two occupants returning to Phil Foster Park with fishing equipment in plain view. A resource inspection revealed 28 snapper in two coolers. The subject stated that each had their own fish in separate coolers. The cooler belonging to the vessel owner had 19 snapper inside. A resource citation was issued for over the daily bag limit of snapper and the fish were seized for evidence.

Officer Brodbeck was on patrol in Boynton Beach when a vehicle was operating erratically. The vehicle was unable to maintain a single lane and was nearly colliding with other cars on the roadway. The operator would not stop and after almost 2 miles, pulled into the driveway of a residence. Officer Brodbeck arrested the driver for fleeing/eluding a marked police vehicle and suspicion of DUI. At the Palm Beach County Jail, the driver refused to provide a breath sample and was charged accordingly.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Howell concluded an investigation regarding an escaped kinkajou which bit and scratched an individual. Captive Wildlife Investigator Howell located the owner of the animal, who was not licensed to possess it and issued two

citations and four warnings. The kinkajou was captured and turned over to a licensed facility.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Pecko and Langley were dispatched to a missing swimmer offshore of Boca Raton. The subject had been swimming next to his vessel and began to drift away. The other occupant aboard lost sight of him. Officers Pecko and Langley began conducting a search with FWC Aviation providing assistance. The pilot located the subject and guided the officers to his location. The subject was unconscious and unresponsive. CPR was initiated and maintained until the subject was turned over to EMS for further medical treatment.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROL

PALM BEACH COUNTY

FWC Pilot Simons and Investigator Luher patrolled the coastline from the Indian River county line to South Palm Beach looking for violations with nesting sea turtles. Both utilized night vision goggles and identified multiple light violations. In total, officers and investigators on the ground stopped and spoke to 116 individuals and had 15 educational contacts. Eleven warnings were issued for light violations, no fishing license and one illegal campfire.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Lieutenant Yanez and Lieutenant Dominguez saw a vessel with 3 people on board and fishing rods displayed in the area of Matheson Hammock Marina. A fisheries inspection revealed a mesh bag at the stern by the outboards with 3 undersized yellowtail snapper. Appropriate citations were issued.

Officer Presser and Officer Sample stopped a vessel displaying fishing gear with two occupants onboard near Boca Chita. A fisheries inspection found 5 barracuda in a cooler on the vessel. A query through dispatch revealed the captain of the vessel had previously received a written warning from FWC for having over the bag limit of barracuda. Appropriate citations were issued.

Officer Sample and Officer Presser stopped a vessel near Boca Chita that was flying a diver down flag while underway. The officers addressed the diver down flag violation

and conducted a vessel safety and resource inspection. The inspection revealed large amounts of live rock as well as hard corals and soft corals and a live queen conch in two containers on the deck of the vessel. The captain of the vessel stated he harvested the corals, live rock, and conch at Soldier Key. Since the violations occurred within Biscayne National Park, the officers seized all the illegally taken resource and turned it over to National Park Service as evidence. After identifying the corals, the National Park Service was able to return all the corals, live rock and queen conch to the resource alive in good condition. Federal charges are pending for the captain of the vessel.

Officer Presser was conducting fisheries inspections in Miami Beach when he saw an individual in possession of a snook that appeared to be under the legal minimum length. The individual said he measured the snook and that it was legal size. The snook was measured by the officer and was found to be 26" which is below the legal slot size of 28-32". The subject was cited accordingly.

Officers Presser, Sample and Saavedra stopped a vessel displaying fishing gear near Haulover Inlet. A resource inspection revealed six undersized yellowtail snappers, an undersized mutton snapper, and an undersized gray triggerfish in a bucket on the deck of the vessel. The captain of the vessel took responsibility for the undersized fish and was cited appropriately.

Officers Presser, Sample and Saavedra stopped a vessel displaying fishing gear near the Venetian Causeway. A resource inspection revealed an undersized hogfish and an undersized mutton snapper in a large cooler on the deck of the vessel. In a separate cooler, Officer Presser located two undersized spotted sea trout and an undersized redfish mixed in with bait fish. Appropriate citations were issued for the violations.

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Oldsen received a call from a concerned citizen about a neighbor possibly using a gill net to catch fish in Marco Island. Officer Oldsen arrived on scene and saw a subject pulling a net from the canal with several fish entangled in it. The net was determined to be illegal and there were six undersized sheepshead entangled. The subject was cited appropriately for the violations.

Officers Yurewitch, Conroy, and Araujo along with Lieutenant Mahoney conducted speed enforcement in two of Collier County's panther zones in conjunction the nationwide Mothers Against Drunk Driving (M.A.D.D.) "Saturation Saturday" detail. No DUI violations were located. The officers issued numerous violations pertaining to speed, faulty equipment, and made an arrest for possession of drugs. The highest recorded speed of the night was 72 MPH in a posted 45 MPH zone.

Officers Kleis and Yurewitch saw what appeared to be two vessels on plane in a posted Slow Speed Minimum Wake Zone. As the vessels approached the officers, they slowed down slightly, but were still in violation of the Slow Speed Zone. The officers conducted a vessel stop to address the violation and saw that the second vessel was being towed

by the first vessel. The operator displayed signs of impairment and refused field sobriety exercises. The subject was arrested for BUI and transported to the Naples Jail Center.

Officer Kleis was on land patrol in the Picayune Strand State Forest Wildlife Management Area the day after the close of archery season. Officer Kleis located a truck that was parked off a main trail, with hunting equipment inside. Officer Kleis located a subject with archery equipment and other hunting gear walking back towards the truck. Officer Kleis contacted the subject to address the violation of hunting out of season and to check the subjects hunting license and required permits. The subject was missing several of the required permits and said he was not aware of the Wildlife Management Area hunting season dates. The subject was issued appropriate citations and warnings for the violations.

Officer Curbelo was on land patrol in the area of Lake Trafford. He conducted a license and resource inspection on a subject using a cast net. It was discovered the subject did not have a freshwater fishing license. The subject told Officer Curbelo he had not caught any fish but Officer Curbelo later discovered several game fish in a bucket the subject had in the back of his vehicle. The subject admitted using the cast net to catch the fish and was cited accordingly.

MONROE COUNTY

Officer's Tafoya, Larios, and Janzen responded to a boating accident around Founders Park near Islamorada. USCG Islamorada boat crew had the operator onboard their patrol vessel. The man was not injured in the accident and there were no other occupants. The subject appeared to be impaired and SFST's were administered. He was arrested for BUI, provided a breath sample of 0.197 and was booked into Plantation Key Jail.

Officer Hettel responded to a call regarding two males catching undersize snapper at the end of Ranger Avenue in Big Pine Key. Officer Hettel arrived and saw two men fishing. A check with FWC Dispatch found one of the men had a confirmed warrant for his arrest. The man was placed under arrest and booked into the Stock Island Jail in Key West. The second male subject was issued a citation for no fishing license.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROL

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Baumgartner and Officer Rafter were conducting federal resource patrol off Key Largo, when they noticed a recreational vessel with numerous fishing poles tied off to a mooring ball within Molasses Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area. The officers boarded the vessel and found 3 ocean triggers, 2 great barracuda, 3 graysby grouper, 1 yellowtail snapper, 52 mangrove snapper, 23 schoolmaster snapper (2 of which were undersized) and 4 French grunts. The individuals were cited federally for fishing within a National Marine Sanctuary and were also charged for state violations including: over the

bag limit mangrove snapper, over the limit snapper aggregate, possession of undersize schoolmaster snapper, improper display, and safety gear violations.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Oldsen and Knutson were on state water patrol in Coon Key Pass when they received a Marine Emergency Response Team (MERT) notification of a capsized sailboat in Caxambas Pass. The notification reported occupants of the sailboat were in the water. Officers Oldsen and Knutson were the first responders on the scene and rescued four people out of the water. There were no injuries and they were transported to the beach in good health.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

COLLIER COUNTY

The FWC Gopher Tortoise Biologist requested an officer meet with them regarding a construction site on Marco Island. Officer Rubenstein met the biologist at a school expansion project where the contractor was in the process of relocating an active gopher tortoise burrow. While the biologist supervised, Officer Rubenstein assisted the contractor in measuring, tagging, and relocating several gopher tortoises.