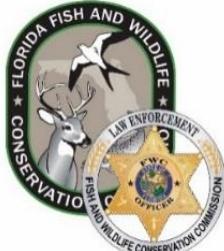


Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report



Patrol, Protect, Preserve

February 28, 2020 through March 12, 2020

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

HOLMES COUNTY

Officers Tison, Letcher, Parrish and Yates worked a joint night hunting detail. Officers Tison and Parrish observed and arrested two subjects for night hunting deer and shooting from the highway right of way. The shooter shot three times at a replica deer. Appropriate citations were issued for the violations.

Lieutenant Walsingham and Officers Gore, Greene, Homan and Yates concluded an investigation which involved several subjects who trespassed while hunting and were deer dog hunting on unpermitted, private property. Other complaints associated with the night hunting investigation included taking doe deer and additional resource violations. Several suspects were identified and after a two-month investigation, criminal warrants for 40 violations were obtained. Charges included: taking deer at night, taking doe deer, convicted felons in possession of firearms, trespassing, willfully waste of game, and illegally running deer dogs without permit. The Alabama Department of Natural Resources, Holmes County Sheriff Office, and the US Marshal Service Task Force assisted with the investigation and arrest of subjects.

While on patrol, Officer Homan observed a vehicle moving slowly using lights to illuminate a field near Bonifay. The subject was a juvenile male driving with a suspended driver license. The passenger was known to the officer and had a history of fish and wildlife violations. A compound bow nocked with a broadhead tipped arrow was

being used to take deer at night. Appropriate charges were filed with the State Attorney's Office.

JACKSON COUNTY

Officer Meade received information about a suspect that shot a doe deer. He located the suspect and conducted an interview. The suspect admitted to shooting a doe the previous day and had a cooler containing the meat. The suspect also provided a picture of the deer on his cell phone. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officers Meade and D. Humphrey responded to a boating accident at Merritt's Mill Pond. The caller reported that he and an occupant hit a stump and were thrown from their vessel. They swam to shore and were approximately 200 yards north of the boat ramp. The officers located the subjects and transported them back to the boat ramp.

LEON COUNTY

While on patrol Officer B. Johnson saw four men moving fishing equipment and coolers between their vehicles in a parking lot. He walked over to talk to them and saw large black drum that were too big to fit in the cooler. The resource inspection revealed two black drum, several weak fish and whiting, as well as nine undersized spotted sea trout. The appropriate citations were issued.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Mullins observed a vehicle shine a light from the roadway into Blackwater Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The officer stopped the subjects for a resource inspection, and they admitted to shining for deer and had a shotgun in the front of the truck between them. The shotgun, ammunition, and light were seized as evidence. The subjects were each issued a misdemeanor notice to appear.

Officers in Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties focused efforts on illegal night hunting activity. Officer Mullins stopped a vehicle actively shining a light. The subject had fresh blood on his pants, and upon further investigation deer hair and blood was found in the vehicle. Officers Roberson, Brown, Hutchinson, and K-9 Zara assisted in the investigation that identified multiple suspects. The investigation revealed approximately 10 deer were taken illegally, with most deer being shot at night from a roadway. Multiple sets of deer parts and firearms were seized. Charges were filed with the state attorney's office for multiple wildlife violations.

BAY COUNTY

Reserve Officer Cooper was conducting vessel patrol in St. Andrews Bay when he saw a vessel with four people on board returning from offshore. He stopped the vessel to conduct a boating safety and resource inspection. The inspection revealed a gag grouper (closed season), 15-inch red grouper (undersize) and 5 grey triggerfish. The

captain of the vessel took responsibility for the violations and was issued appropriate citations and warnings.

Reserve Officer Cooper was conducting vessel patrol in St. Andrews Bay when he saw a vessel with two people on board returning from offshore. He stopped the vessel to conduct a boating safety and resource inspection. The inspection revealed two undersize grey triggerfish. The captain of the vessel took responsibility for the undersize fish and was issued the appropriate citation.

GULF COUNTY

Senior Officer Specialist M. Webb was on water patrol at the Highland View Bridge. He conducted a resource inspection on three men which found 12 redfish, two of which were undersized. When questioned, the men claimed they didn't know the daily bag limit or size limit on redfish. Officer Webb provided the men with current copies of the saltwater regulations and issued the appropriate citations and warnings.

Officer Gerber was conducting resource inspections underneath the Highland View Bridge. He found one individual in possession of three undersize spotted seatrout and one undersize redfish. The appropriate citations and warnings were issued.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Corbin observed a vessel return to a local boat ramp. As he pulled into the parking lot, he observed a subject remove a greater amberjack from the vessel and hand it to a subject on the dock. The subjects noticed his patrol vehicle and returned the greater amberjack to the vessel. A resource inspection was conducted, and an undersized greater amberjack was located on the vessel. A notice to appear citation was issued to the captain of the vessel for harvesting a greater amberjack during the closed season.

While on water patrol Officer Corbin located a vessel anchored on state waters without an anchor light and an expired registration decal was attached to the vessel. Officer Corbin contacted the registered owner of the vessel who advised he sold the vessel and provided the subject's name who purchased the vessel. Officer Corbin located the new vessel owner who stated he had purchased the vessel seven months ago. The owner of the vessel was issued a notice to appear citation for failure to transfer title within 30 days and a citation for no navigational lights.

Officer Corbin was on land patrol when he queried a vehicle tag that returned to a stolen vehicle. A traffic stop was conducted on the vehicle and the driver was detained. The driver was unable to provide a driver's license or insurance for the vehicle. The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office arrived on scene to assist. A deputy removed the passenger from the vehicle and observed him making movements in a manner to conceal something under the passenger seat. The owner of the vehicle arrived on scene and gave permission to search the vehicle. During a search of the vehicle small

bags of drugs were located along with other drug paraphernalia. Both subjects were arrested and charged accordingly. The driver was also charged with driving on a suspended driver's license-habitual offender.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

HOLMES COUNTY

Officer Yates assisted with the Bonifay FWC hunter safety class by teaching the law portion of the class. Thirteen students were in attendance

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

NASSAU COUNTY

Officer Sweat was on patrol and he found several items from a woman's purse. Further investigation revealed the articles belonged to a person whose vehicle was burglarized the night before. Everything was recovered except a firearm. The articles were turned over to the sheriff's office for further processing.

DUVAL COUNTY

Officer Schirbock was notified of a deceased American Bald Eagle in Jacksonville. Upon arrival, he located the eagle that appeared to be a juvenile that was kicked out of the nest. He retrieved the eagle and sent it to the National Eagle Depository for the determination of death.

Officer Gilmore, Lentz, Hayes and Lieutenant Bridwell, were working north Jacksonville on trespass complaints. The officers located several individuals operating off-road vehicles on property without written permission. They educated the operators and explained that they were trespassing on private property and should not return without written permission.

SUWANNEE COUNTY

Officer Boone received information from a constituent of possible trespass on private property. Upon arrival Officer Boone entered the woods and heard someone running away in the brush. Lieutenant Humphries, Investigator Sharpe, Officer Davenport and the Department of Correction's K-9 team responded to the property for assistance in locating the fleeing subject. The subject was apprehended and confessed to felony trespass, killing a turkey out of season and hiding both the gun and turkey in the woods

nearby. The individual was transported to the Suwannee County Jail and charged appropriately.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

LEVY COUNTY

Officers Bell and Robson were conducting land patrol when they observed a pickup truck parked in a closed area of Goethe State Forest. Upon inspection of the truck, it was found that the subject was hunting wild hogs on state land out of season. The subject was issued three criminal charges for hunting out of season, hunting with dogs out of season and illegal entry to a State Forest. The subject was also issued three infractions and one warning for the appropriate violations.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer Wingard was on patrol in Daytona Beach and observed an individual fishing from shore along the Halifax River. He watched the man catching fish, looking around, and place the fish in a tackle box. A resource inspection revealed the man was in possession of six grey snapper which were all undersize. The man was issued a criminal notice to appear for the violations.

PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Wester and Lieutenant Dickson received video footage of a subject on the Ocklawaha River pulling commercial crab traps and stealing the crabs from them. The suspect was located and admitted to the molestation of the traps and theft of the product. The suspect was charged accordingly.

MARION COUNTY

Senior Officer Wear was patrolling the Ocala Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when he heard a gunshot originating from a neighboring piece of property owned by St. Johns Water Management. Officer Wear made his way to where the shot originated and observed a vehicle with two subjects parked alongside the boundary fence. Upon contacting the subjects, Officer Wear discovered a freshly killed seven-point buck in the bed of the truck. The passenger, who had fresh blood smeared on his face and clothes, stated he had retrieved the deer from water management property only after it had been struck by a vehicle. After examining the deer carcass for evidence, Officer Wear discovered a small caliber bullet wound in the neck area and the carcass showed no

signs that it had been struck by a vehicle. The appropriate charges are being filed with the State Attorney's Office.

BREVARD COUNTY

Officer Balgo observed an individual walking along the rocks off US 192. A resource inspection located a bucket containing several oysters and a knife in the water with several additional piles of oysters. The harvest of oysters in this area is prohibited. The individual received a warning a few months prior for harvesting oysters in the same location. The individual was cited accordingly.

Officer Balgo observed an individual wading in the water in a closed park off SR 520. A resource inspection found the individual in possession of four undersized sheepshead, one undersized black drum, two undersized spotted seatrout, and over the bag limit of mullet. He also did not possess a valid fishing license. The individual was cited accordingly.

Officer Hallsten was conducting fisheries inspections at Sebastian Inlet State Park when he made contact with five subjects who were walking their fishing equipment back to their vehicle. Officer Hallsten inspected a cooler that was being carried which contained legal fish. Further inspection of a five-gallon bucket revealed two egg bearing blue crabs, two undersized sheepshead, and an undersized mangrove snapper under the cast nets. Citations were written accordingly.

ORANGE COUNTY

Officer Infante was on patrol in Wekiwa Springs State Park when one of the park rangers told her that a vehicle was driving down a hiking trail. She waited for the vehicle to return and conducted a traffic stop. Officer Infante found the subject to be in possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia. The subject was arrested and taken to jail.

SEMINOLE COUNTY

Officers Infante and Auber responded to a boating accident at the Marine Boat Tree Marina. An operator had struck another vessel resulting in damage and was suspected to be intoxicated. The operator exhibited signs of impairment and Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks were conducted. The operator was arrested and taken to jail for boating under the influence with property damage or injury. He refused to provide a breath sample.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

ORANGE COUNTY

Lieutenant Hudson represented FWC at the Wounded Warriors Outdoors (WWO) Annual Quail Hunt. WWO sponsors outdoor adventures for wounded warriors to assist in the healing process.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

PUTNAM COUNTY

FWC officers from the Putnam and Marion County squads, including K9 Officer Simpson, worked Boating Safety Day at the Palatka Riverfront. This event was in conjunction with the Florida Azalea Festival and was sponsored by FWC, the Palatka City Commission, Putnam County Sheriff's Office, and the US Coast Guard Auxiliary. A full day boating safety course was offered and instructed by the Auxiliary and FWC officers, and static displays were set up outside for the general public. Several hundred people attended the event.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Officer Conrad and Lieutenant VanTrees responded to a complaint of an individual keeping undersized fish near the bridge. When the officers arrived, they observed an individual walking from under the bridge holding a plastic bag. A resource inspection revealed two undersized snook during a closed season. The individual was cited accordingly.

While on patrol near the Courtney Campbell bridge, Officer Specialist Caldwell observed an individual fishing. He waited for the individual to finish and initiated a resource inspection. During the inspection he discovered the individual to be in possession of a redfish and a spotted seatrout during closed seasons. The individual was cited accordingly.

While on patrol near the Tampa Bypass Canal, Officer Rorer observed three individuals leaving the area carrying fishing gear. When the individuals saw her, one of the men attempted to hide a bucket behind a concrete barrier. Officer Rorer retrieved the bucket and found a cast net with four large-mouth bass. The appropriate citations were issued.

LEE COUNTY

Officer Furbay and Officer Zenoniani received a call about subjects hunting in the Charlotte Buffer Preserve State Park. The officers located five suspects with two hunting dogs wearing cut collars and GPS devices. The subjects admitted to hunting hogs within the state park. The appropriate citations were issued.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer Specialist Bibeau observed a vessel return to a nearby boat ramp and conducted a fisheries inspection. The inspection revealed a five-gallon bucket filled with fillets. The operator of the vessel admitted that some of the fillets belonged to red grouper and was issued a misdemeanor citation for failure to land reef fish in whole condition.

While on land patrol, Officer Specialist Bibeau observed an individual fishing from a jetty. He watched the individual from a concealed location and observed the angler catch multiple fish. An inspection revealed fourteen sheepshead, six of which were undersized. The appropriate citation and warnings were issued.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

LEE COUNTY

FWC Officer Self and Officer Midolo assisted FWC biologists in rescuing a manatee in a canal inside Matanzas Pass in Ft. Myers. The manatee was suffering from cold shock and had white markings over its entire body. The manatee was corralled using a patrol vessel and netted from shore by biologists. It was transported to the lab for medical treatment and observation.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Captain Carpenter responded to a report of a sick or injured sea turtle in a canal behind a residence in Port Charlotte. He found a very sluggish Kemp's Ridley sea turtle floating by the seawall. Using the homeowner's landing net, he pulled the turtle from the water and brought it to manatee research interns at the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute's Port Charlotte lab. The interns took the turtle to MOTE Marine in Sarasota for evaluation and rehabilitation.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Salem participated in a youth turkey hunt. He pre-scouted the area before season and was able to locate some turkeys. Officer Salem helped a young man and his father harvest a nice bird and a wild hog. The trip was an amazing experience for the participants and provided the opportunity for families to make memories, get to know FWC officers on a personal level and learn to love the outdoors.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

Officers Ryan, Dudas and Luna were on vessel patrol in the vicinity of Dania Beach. They conducted a marine fisheries inspection on a vessel in the Dania Cut Off Canal and found a grouper harvested out of season. The operator of the vessel was issued a notice to appear, and the grouper was seized as evidence.

Officer Dudas and Lieutenant Laubemberger were on night patrol when they observed a kayak with two persons fishing in the Dania Cut Off Canal. The kayak did not display a light to make its presence known. A fisheries and boating safety inspection was conducted and one individual was placed under arrest and transported to the Broward County Jail for several extraditable felony warrants out of Ohio.

Officers Seldomridge, Morgan, Forrest, Conti, and Lieutenant Brock worked a targeted enforcement detail focusing on the southern part of Broward County. Their target for the detail were vessels stored on the waters of the state with registration and navigation light violations. The officers checked every vessel South of Port Everglades. Fifty-three citations were issued.

Officer Tarr was on patrol in Sunrise, when he observed an individual fishing. A resource inspection found the subject in possession of one undersized snook. The appropriate criminal citation was issued, and the fish was seized for evidence.

Officer Nall and Lieutenant McDonald received information regarding a local retail market selling unwholesome fish to the public. A retail inspection found unwholesome fish products for sale to the public and being stored in the back of the market in poor conditions. The owner of the store was issued two criminal mandatory notice to appear citations and multiple warnings referenced quality control/cleanliness.

Officers Hart and Nall were patrolling offshore late at night when they spotted a vessel anchored on the reef with passengers fishing. A resource inspection of the vessel revealed four undersized mutton snapper and an undersized, out of season red grouper. One individual on board the vessel stated that he had caught all the fish. That individual was issued multiple criminal mandatory notice to appear citations. The other individuals on board received infraction citations for not having valid saltwater fishing licenses.

Officer Nall and Officer Hart were on patrol when they received information about an illegal net. They had been investigating this complaint for eight months. Upon arriving on scene, Officer Nall and Officer Hart observed a net spread out across the canal and saw two individuals get in a boat and begin to fish the net. The net was being used illegally as a stop net, an illegal gill/entangling net, and was over the maximum allowed 500 square footage for any net in state waters (850.5 ft). The net was made with

monofilament, which is outlawed in Florida for this type of net. A resource inspection revealed multiple criminal violations and major resource violations. One of the individuals was given multiple criminal mandatory notice to appear citations and infraction citations. The net was seized as evidence.

Officer Nall and Hart conducted a quality control inspection of a local seafood market. Upon inspection, the owners of the market did not possess a valid saltwater retail license to legally sell saltwater fisheries products. The officers also observed multiple quality control violations. The owner was issued a criminal mandatory notice to appear citation and multiple warnings.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck was on patrol at a local green market to inspect seafood vendors for proper licensing. An inspection of one vendor revealed they were selling pompano, redfish, dolphin, swordfish, wahoo, snapper, and stone crab. The officer observed numerous transactions and a list of species with prices. The vendor was unable to produce a saltwater retail license or any invoices for the fish being sold to the public. The appropriate citations were issued to the vendor for the violations.

Officer Ames conducted a follow up visit on a local fish house to make sure the owner renewed his wholesale/retail licenses. Upon entering the business, Officer Ames observed what seemed to be undersized red snapper. After further investigation, 29 undersized red snapper were located. The owner of the business was cited accordingly, and the snappers were seized.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Officer Bingham was on vessel water patrol when he encountered a recreational fishing vessel with three people on board. An inspection determined that the vessel was a charter. Further investigation revealed multiple safety violations; improper personal flotation devices and no distress signals. The captain also did not have Merchant Mariner Credentials and the vessel was improperly registered. The Coast Guard was notified of the charter and responded to address the violations. The charter was terminated.

GLADES COUNTY

Officers Crosby and Madsen were working around Lake Okeechobee targeting black crappie violations. Upon checking occupants on a vessel returning from fishing, two subjects were found to be in possession of undersized black crappie. Both subjects received a notice to appear for the violations and 12 black crappie were seized as evidence.

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Schroer and Lieutenant Hankinson were dispatched to Johnathan Dickinson State Park when a vehicle was reported to be stuck on a heavily trafficked mountain bike trial. The vehicle had entered the park through a non-designated entrance the night prior and did not pay entrance fees or possess a permit to recreate within the park at night. The vehicle caused damage to plants and parts of the improved bike trail. The operator was cited appropriately.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

GLADES COUNTY

Officer Davis was dispatched to a search and rescue on Lake Okeechobee for two lost fishermen. Due to approaching weather, Officer Davis called the fishermen and attempted to talk them through getting back to the Harney Pond Canal Boat Ramp where they launched. They were not familiar with the area and were not comfortable trying to get back on their own, Officer Davis and Officer Fijalkowski responded to the Alvin Ward Boat Ramp to conduct a search for the two fishermen. The fishermen were able to recall landmarks they had seen while fishing and the officers used this information and their knowledge of the lake to locate the fishermen and escort them back to Harney Pond Canal boat ramp.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Miano assisted with teaching duties at the Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) program, hosted by the FWC and held at the Everglades Youth Conservation Camp (EYCC). The program introduces and teaches women outdoor skills, such as tracking, hunting, fishing, outdoor cooking, geocaching, firearms, archery and more. Officer Miano assisted at the firing range both for general range safety and assisting women who had never shot a firearm. Women in attendance ranged in age from 20 to 60.

Investigator Fowler and Officer Boyd attended an outreach event at Citrus Cove Elementary School. The school was holding a career day where multiple agencies from different career paths were represented by their members who explained to the children some details of their job. Investigator Fowler and Officer Boyd represented FWC and spoke to approximately 1,000 students about the role FWC plays in our society. They spoke about the conservation of natural resources (fish and animal population), environmental responsibility and public safety on the waterways and state-regulated lands. They also highlighted boating safety tips and the importance of using Personal Flotation Devices (PFD's).

GLADES COUNTY

Lieutenant Brown and Officers Allen, Dial, Flynn and Madsen participated in the Chalo Nitka kids fishing tournament in Moore Haven. They assisted kids with baiting hooks and weighing fish. At the end of the tournament, they gave fishing poles to all the children who participated. There were over 150 children at the event.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officers M. Osorio, J. Hart, and Investigator W. Stiffler worked jointly with the Everglades National Park Service (NPS) during a Targeted Enforcement Action focused on compliance with regulations for South Florida Water Management District lands, WMAs and WEAs. The detail checked 68 users which resulted in 12 misdemeanor arrests, three trespass warnings, one towed vehicle, and three written warnings.

A Targeted Enforcement Action, "One Night-Stand" was conducted to address growing concern for night violations such as, animal poaching, theft, trespassing, and discharging of firearms on South Florida Water Management (SFWMD) lands. The detail focused patrol and investigative efforts in the SFWMD Territories of Southern Glades, Rocky Glades, Frog Pond, and 8.5 Square Mile. This joint effort resulted in a felony arrest, multiple misdemeanor arrests, and seven subjects being trespass from SFWMD lands.

COLLIER COUNTY

During a targeted enforcement action, Officers Plussa and Yurewitch stopped a commercial shell tour vessel for an inspection. Officer Plussa found a bucket which contained a sea turtle skull and rostrum bone. The commercial operator admitted they were from a loggerhead sea turtle and he did not have a permit for their carriage onboard. He was criminally charged with two counts of "take by possession" of an endangered sea turtle species.

While on land patrol on the Isle of Capri, Officer Conroy checked the area of a restaurant that had reported having trouble with trespassing. She patrolled the area and found 2 males fishing on the docks of the restaurant. Officer Conroy observed the fisherman lay a fish on the edge of the dock and conducted a fisheries inspection. The fish was an undersized snook. The appropriate citations were issued for undersized snook, no fishing license, and no snook permit.

Officer Georgevich responded to a report of fishermen fileting undersized snook. When Officer Georgevich arrived on scene, he found the fishermen in possession of 24 small filets. They admitted to catching and filleting twelve undersized snook and were cited accordingly.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROL

COLLIER COUNTY

Lieutenant Bulger and Officers Plussa and Conroy conducted targeted enforcement action directed at patrolling the Florida Panther speed zone in Collier County. Multiple vehicles were stopped, with four subjects being cited for exceeding the 45 MPH nighttime limit. All violations were speeds above 72 MPH, almost 30 MPH over the speed limit. The officers educated the public on the importance of decreasing their speed at night when the panthers are most active in the area.

Officer Polly and Lieutenant Bulger participated in an ongoing targeted enforcement action plan, focusing on panther zone speed enforcement. The highest recorded speed was 85 MPH in a 45 MPH zone. Officers issued numerous citations for unlawful speed and educated the public on the importance of decreasing their speed at night when the panthers are most active in the area.

Lieutenant Mahoney, Investigator Carroll, and Officers Plussa, Yurewitch, Wagner, Georgevich, Curbelo, Arbogast participated with Investigators from the Coast Guard in a joint mission targeting commercial charter vessels with unlicensed captains. Multiple vessels were cited for commercial safety equipment carriage, commercial registration, and charter licensing violations. Charters with violations were terminated due to the safety of the passengers.

Officers Plussa, Conroy and Yurewitch conducted a focused enforcement effort addressing “At-Risk and Derelict Vessels” in Collier County. The officers documented seven derelict vessels in the areas of Naples Bay, Marco Island, and Keewaydin Island. The vessel owners were cited for violations related to expired registration, improper display, unlawful mooring, and navigation rule noncompliance.

Officers Plussa and Conroy conducted state park enforcement during St. Patrick’s Day weekend at Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park. They issued multiple citations for unlawful speed near pedestrians, driver license violations, open container and marijuana possession. Officers were also called to assist with patrons causing a disturbance and not complying with park staff.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Plussa and Conroy received a report of an injured gopher tortoise that had been hit by a car in Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park. The officers transported the tortoise to the Von Arx Wildlife Hospital at the Conservancy of Southwest Florida for rehabilitation and release back into the wild.

Officer Plussa and Lieutenant Mahoney accompanied area bear biologist Chris Boyce to a commercial establishment in Naples with repeated bear complaints. They met with the general manager and completed an exterior inspection of where the garbage was stored. Approximately seven trash receptacles were unsecured, and a bag of trash had been torn open leaving a trail of debris into the woods. The manager was issued a notice of non-compliance and explained measures that could be taken to come into compliance.

Lieutenant Bulger responded to a residence that had an injured pelican in their pool. When Lieutenant Bulger arrived, he found a pelican with a fishing hook in its neck. The pelican was safely captured and delivered to the Conservancy of Southwest Florida for rehabilitation.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

MONROE COUNTY

PIO Officer Dube and Officer Specialist Rafter assisted with Plantation Key School's Career Day in Tavernier. Officers gave several presentations to elementary and middle school students throughout the day. Officers discussed the duties and responsibilities of being an FWC Officer and how students can help with conservation efforts – along with being good stewards of the Keys. Officers were very popular with students and staff after their presentation portion and brought several species of snakes, tortoise's and a American alligator for "Show and Tell".

COLLIER COUNTY

Lieutenant Mahoney and Thomas Vatter, recreational outreach coordinator with FWC Division of Marine Fisheries Management, attended the annual Kid's Fishing Clinic at Naples Pier. During the outreach event, approximately 100 children learned about habitats, proper fish handling, knot tying, and stewardship in the marine environment. Each child was provided with a rod/reel, bait and the opportunity to fish from the pier. The fishing clinic strongly promoted the connection with research, species management and law enforcement collaborating for successful conservation of our natural resources.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officer Hedgepeth responded to a boating incident involving a vessel explosion that occurred at the Haulover Sandbar. FWC officers nearby heard the explosion and quickly arrived at the scene to assist the victims. One male was pulled from the water with minimal injuries. Miami Dade Fire rescue, Aventura PD, and Miami Dade Marine Patrol assisted with the response as well.