

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



Patrol, Protect, Preserve

May 1, 2020 through May 14, 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

BAY COUNTY

Senior Officer Wicker received a call for assistance from United States Coast Guard (USCG) Station Panama City. USCG officers stopped a vessel that had entered the restricted Alligator Bayou on Naval Support Activity (NSA) Panama City. They believed the operator to be impaired. Senior Officer Wicker arrived at the USCG station and conducted Standard Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST) on the vessel operator. The operator was then asked to provide a breath sample. The breath samples provided were .140 and .133. This was over an hour and a half after USCG Officers first saw the vessel in the restricted area. The operator was arrested for BUI and booked in the Bay County Jail.

Officer Specialist T. Basford, Officer Gates and Reserve Officer Cooper were on vessel patrol in St. Andrews Bay when they saw a vessel returning from offshore. As the vessel approached the officers, they saw that the vessel had a diver down flag displayed while underway. The officers conducted a boating safety inspection and noticed dive gear and spear guns on board the vessel. A resource inspection found two undersize grey triggerfish. The captain of the vessel took responsibility for the violation and was issued the appropriate citation.

Officer Specialist T. Basford, Lieutenant J. Allen and Officer Specialist Palmer were working complaints at fishing piers regarding individuals keeping undersize and over bag limit of pompano and Spanish mackerel. Several groups of fishermen were

inspected as they were leaving the piers which resulted in ten citations and several warnings for possession of undersize pompano, possession of undersize blue fish, possession of undersize Spanish mackerel and over the bag limit of Spanish mackerel. The officers seized two undersize blue fish, one undersize pompano and 70 Spanish mackerel that were either undersize or over the bag limit.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officers Allgood and Manning conducted Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) offshore patrol. Several vessels were checked for resource inspections and several citations were issued. The violations included harvesting yellow fin tuna without a Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Permit and chartering a fishing vessel without charter license.

GULF COUNTY

Senior Officers H. and M. Webb observed a recreational fishing vessel returning to Captain's Cove Marina. The operator was having difficulty pulling up to the dock and was displaying signs of impairment. Senior Officer H. Webb administered Standard Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST) and the operator was arrested for BUI and transported to the Gulf County Jail.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Investigator Pifer was on land patrol at a local county park when he observed three individuals loading spear fishing equipment, a cooler, and kayak in the back of a truck. A resource inspection revealed a redfish in the cooler which had been speared. One of the individuals admitted to spearing the redfish and was issued the appropriate citation.

Investigator Pifer and Officer Specialist Corbin were on water patrol near Crab Island when they stopped a vessel with sixteen individuals on board to conduct a boating safety inspection. During the inspection, it was determined that the owner/operator purchased the vessel approximately four months prior and failed to transfer the title and registration. The owner/operator was cited for failure to transfer title within 30 days, insufficient number of life jackets, and children under six years of age not wearing life jackets. Written warnings were issued for no type IV personal flotation device and expired registration. The officers also addressed the violation of the Governor's Executive Order regarding no more than ten persons on a vessel.

Lieutenant Bartlett and Officer Hicks were on water patrol when they received a call from a concerned citizen regarding an intoxicated individual on Crab Island that was causing a disturbance. The individual further stated that the subject's vessel was currently anchored on Crab Island and were concerned he would operate the vessel while intoxicated. After locating the vessel, the officers observed the operator pull the vessels anchor and begin idling toward Destin Harbor. A boating safety inspection on the vessel was conducted, and the operator displayed numerous signs of impairment. While Standard Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST) were being performed, the officers

discovered the operator had multiple outstanding felony warrants for his arrest. The operator was arrested for boating under the influence and the outstanding warrants.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Ramos was patrolling local boat ramps in Blackwater River and noticed a vessel without working navigational lights causing a wake in an idle speed zone. Officer Ramos also observed the operator consume an alcoholic beverage. A boating safety inspection revealed numerous safety and registration violations. Standard Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST) were conducted and the operator was arrested and transported to the county jail for BUI. One boating citation for missing safety equipment and five warnings for other violations were issued.

Officer Ramos was on vessel patrol in Blackwater River and saw a boat traveling at a high rate of speed in a posted slow speed zone. A vessel stop was conducted to address the violation and the operator displayed signs of impairment. Standard Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST) were performed and the operator was arrested for boating under the influence and booked into the county jail. Appropriate citations and warnings were issued for other violations.

K-9 Officer Hutchinson saw a vehicle pulled down to a creek in Blackwater State Forest and observed a subject holding a dip net and flashlight, shining the creek. He recognized the man from previous encounters and knew that his fishing and hunting privileges were suspended. While speaking with the man and his girlfriend, Officer Hutchinson observed a wet cast net and a bucket containing live game fish in the back of the truck. The subject admitted he caught the bream with the cast net, and that his fishing license was suspended for a three-year period. Office Hutchinson measured the cast net and discovered that it was an illegal net to possess. The man was charged appropriately for the violations.

Officer Ramos received a call from a person alleging someone had shot a deer in his backyard during the early morning hours. Officers Ramos, Hutchinson and Roberson arrived at the complainant's home to investigate and observed several subjects on a power line easement in an area closed to public access. One subject was carrying a long gun and the other two were on an ATV in the closed area. The subject with the firearm admitted he shot at a deer before sunrise behind the complainant's home and that he knew deer hunting season was closed. While surveying the general area where the illegal activity occurred, K-9 Zara alerted at the edge of a large pond. Officer Hutchinson discovered that the subject had a trot line which caught a large fish. The subject's firearm was seized, and appropriate citations were issued for hunting deer during the closed season and attempting to take deer with a gun and light. Officer Hutchinson also issued the suspect a notice to appear for the illegal trot line.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

CLAY COUNTY

Officer E. Barber was on water patrol in Black Creek in an area that had recent complaints of operators violating the manatee no wake zone. While in the area he observed a bass boat on plane in the zone and conducting a vessel stop. The operator exhibited signs of impairment and was asked to perform field sobriety tasks. As the operator got on the patrol vessel, he said he was guilty and deserved to go to jail. He was transported to the Clay County Jail where he refused to submit to a lawful breath test. The passenger in the vessel, who was the owner, also appeared to be intoxicated and was warned not to operate the vessel. A sober friend of the owner was contacted and took possession of the vessel.

Officers J. Barber and Lange were on patrol and observed a bass boat being operated near a boat ramp on Black Creek. They recognized the operator, and lone occupant, as the owner Officer E. Barber had dealt with earlier in the day. They contacted the operator and observed signs of impairment. After investigating for boating under the influence, the subject was arrested and transported to the Clay County Jail.

Lieutenant Haney was on patrol at a boat ramp on Black Creek when he observed a vessel approach the ramp and occupants begin unloading many alcoholic beverages from a cooler and compartments of the boat. He contacted the operator of the vessel and while speaking to him one of the male passengers appeared to be highly intoxicated. Lieutenant Haney later observed the man drive up to the ramp from the parking area and approached his patrol vehicle. The operator attempted to leave the parking lot quickly, nearly striking Lieutenant Haney. Lieutenant Haney conducted a driving under the influence investigation, and found the subject was underage, in possession of alcohol, and highly intoxicated. He was arrested and transported to the Clay County Jail, where he refused to submit to a lawful breath test.

DIXIE COUNTY

Officer Butler and FWC Recruit Miller were on water patrol when they observed a vessel returning from offshore. A resource inspection discovered the occupant in possession of a red snapper during the closed season and over the bag limit of amberjack. The subject was issued a Notice to Appear for the violations.

Officer Sheffield was working information he received about subjects trespassing on county owned property in Dixie County. While on patrol in the area he observed two subjects actively trespassing on the property. Officer Sheffield made contact and following a brief interview charged both individuals with trespass.

DUVAL COUNTY

Officers Cheshire and Schirbock were on JEA patrol at the three-mile marker off Mayport when they conducted a vessel stop on a cuddy cabin vessel coming in from offshore. When the officers activated their emergency blue lights on the marked patrol vessel the captain made an abrupt turn towards the patrol vessel placing its bow at the officers. This is a maneuver is commonly used to dump fish overboard where officers can't see. Officer Schirbock kept his eye on the occupants of the vessel while Officer Cheshire maneuvered the patrol vessel to the rear to see if they could find anything floating. The officers located a bag of fish fillets floating behind the vessel while the captain had his vessel in reverse trying to run the bag of fish fillets over, even though he was told several times to place the boat in neutral. The officers retrieved the bag of icy cold fillets and issue each subject the proper citations.

Officers Schirbock, Christmas and Hutchins were working state parks around Talbot Island and notice several subjects in the water with buckets. The officers checked the men and found they were harvesting oysters. Because the area is restricted to the taking of oysters, photographs were taken, and the oysters were returned to the water alive. The individuals were issued the appropriate citations.

Over the past week, Officer Sankey addressed 45 different violations at the Talbot State Parks. The violations ranged from trespass to illegally harvesting shellfish in a closed area.

NASSAU COUNTY

While on patrol at Amelia Island State Park Officer Sweat saw a man struggling to pull a large cooler. An inspection of the cooler revealed that it was nearly full of mullet. It also contained an oversize red drum and illegal stone crabs. The appropriate citation and warnings were issued.

Officers Tucker, Lemaster and Sankey inspected three fishermen with approximately two five-gallon buckets full of clams and one horseshoe crab. Dispatch informed that none of the subjects had fishing licenses or a saltwater products license. In addition, one of the subjects had a history of resource violations. The subjects were charged accordingly.

SUWANNEE COUNTY

Lieutenant Humphries and Officers Davenport, Cline and Ransom responded to a report of a distressed individual from the Florida Highway Patrol and Department of Agricultural Consumer Services. The report stated that a distraught subject had jumped from a nearby bridge and was last seen floating down the river struggling to stay afloat. FWC Officers provided waterborne roaming patrols and assisted the Department of Corrections K-9 team in apprehending the individual who was found hiding in a mass of palmettos.

TAYLOR COUNTY

Officers Touchton and Edwards were checking fishermen at the Hickory Mound area when they located a subject in possession of a short red drum. After questioning the subject, three more short red drum were found hidden in the trunk of a car. The subject was charged appropriately.

Officers Waychoff and Touchton were on water patrol in the Steinhatchee River. They observed the captain of a vessel pull to a dock and start unloading dive equipment. The officers conducted a resource inspection and located two undersize gag grouper and three undersize red grouper. The appropriate citations were issued for the violations.

Officers Wilcox and Edwards were on patrol near Keaton Beach checking persons fishing. They encountered a subject in possession of an undersized cobia. The subject was cited appropriately. Later in the day the officers checked the occupants of a vessel returning from an offshore fishing trip and discovered two undersized amberjack. The captain of the vessel was appropriately cited.

Officer Waychoff was checking fisherman near Keaton Beach when he located a subject in possession of several undersized spotted sea trout. The subject was issued a citation for the violation.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

MADISON COUNTY

FWC received a report of an alligator in the yard of a local resident. Officer Vazquez captured the alligator without incident and relocated it to a remote area.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer West received information that a subject had illegally killed an American alligator. Officer West met with the subject and investigated. It was discovered that the man was in possession of unlawfully taken alligator meat. The subject stated that he kept the tail meat from the alligator then discarded the carcass. Officer West cited the subject appropriately.

Officer Pelzel was on patrol in the area of High Bridge boat ramp when she observed two male subjects fishing out of a canoe – one adult and one juvenile. She waited for the subjects to return to the boat ramp and conducted a fisheries inspection. The subjects were in possession of three spotted seatrout, one black drum and two undersized snook. The adult male was cited appropriately for the undersized snook.

Officer Pelzel was on water patrol in the area of Disappearing Island when she observed a pontoon boat with eight occupants cutting across the channel leaving the area at a 90-degree angle, on a full plane. This action was unsafe, and a violation of inland navigational federal regulations. She conducted a vessel stop to address the violation. The pontoon was a rental from a local livery. The operator exhibited signs of impairment and agreed to Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks. The subject was placed under arrest for boating under the influence and transported to U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Ponce. Investigator Sumpter met Officer Pelzel at USCG and administered a breathalyzer. The subject's breath samples were .081 G/210l and .080 G/210L respectively. The subject was booked into the Volusia County Branch Jail.

FWC officers patrolled Lake George during a large boating event known as "Mayhem" on the lake. There were approximately 350-400 boats in attendance. There were no major incidents or boating accidents associated with the event this year. Several citations were issued for violation of the manatee slow speed zones and for boating safety violations. Five vessel operators were arrested for boating under the influence.

SUMTER COUNTY

Officers Teal, Sweet, and Scrambling patrolled Richloam Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and encountered several groups of people driving on closed roads, destroying state lands, operating ATVs in the WMA, in possession of alcohol, and in possession of controlled substances. All the subjects were cited appropriately.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

While conducting a joint inspection with the Department of Agriculture on a local oyster house, Officer Specialist Thomas observed discrepancies in the oyster intake log. After addressing the discrepancies with the oyster house and harvester, the harvester admitted to harvesting oysters, re-submerging the oysters, and returning later to remove the oysters from the water. The harvester also admitted to delivering oysters after the oyster house closed on one of the days in question and logging the oysters the next morning. The harvester was issued a citation for failure to deliver oysters on the same day of harvest and a citation for re-submerging oysters without being a certified aquaculture farmer. The oyster house was issued eight citations by the Department of Agriculture.

Officer Specialist Thomas stopped a fishing vessel for inspection and located a red snapper and parrot fish. Both are prohibited/not allowed to be harvested in federal waters. Using discretion and taking into consideration the fishermen did not know what he caught, Officer Thomas issued a state misdemeanor bond citation for the undersized red snapper violation and a state written warning for possession of parrot fish.

Officer Specialist Thomas and Officer Lawrence stopped a fishing vessel at Intruder Reef and performed a resource inspection which revealed 16 red snapper. Officer

Thomas issued the owner of the vessel a federal citation for possession of red snapper in federal waters. The vessel owner voluntarily released the snapper back into the water.

While patrolling County Road 13 Officer Chamberlain observed a subject using a cast net in a freshwater pond. A resource inspection revealed the subject was in possession of nine black crappie and four blue gill. The fish were photographed and released back into the water. The subject was issued a Notice to Appear for the violation.

LAKE / SUMTER COUNTIES

Officers from the Northeast and Southwest Regions joined together to work a detail targeting the high number of users in Richloam Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Richloam WMA is located in Pasco, Hernando, Sumter and Lake Counties. Officers checked approximately 100 users and issued eight written warnings and 16 non-criminal infractions. Additionally, there were four misdemeanor arrests, one warrant arrest and two felony arrests.

MARION COUNTY

Officer Specialist Rice and Officer Wild were on water patrol on Lake George when they stopped a vessel for a registration violation. The operator showed signs of impairment and Officer Wild conducted Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks. The subject was arrested for BUI and booked into the Volusia County Jail.

BREVARD COUNTY

Officer Mock responded to a call concerning three individuals bowfishing from a private dock. Officer Mock arrived on scene but was unable to locate the subjects. He canvassed a nearby neighborhood and observed three individuals matching the description given by the caller. The subjects saw Officer Mock and attempted to sneak away into their residence. Officer Mock contacted them and conducted a resource inspection. One subject was found to have illegally harvested a snook over the legal slot size with a bow and arrow. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officers Mendelson and Hocker conducted airboat patrols along the St. John's River. The officers observed several individuals in the middle of the channel fishing with cast nets. The individuals harvested bluegill (panfish) illegally while cast netting and stored them at the bottom of their bucket. They were issued a Notice to Appear for illegal method of take of freshwater gamefish.

Officers Mendelson and Hocker observed a commercial freshwater fishing vessel near Middle River. The individual was observed unloading fish from his cast net. Upon inspection, there were large quantities of armored catfish for commercial purposes. Inside a separate cooler, there were several different species of freshwater gamefish that were illegally harvested with the cast net. The cooler contained twelve black

crappie, one warmouth (panfish), one red-ear sunfish (panfish) and one bluegill (panfish). The individual was issued a Notice to Appear for illegal method of take of freshwater gamefish, and several commercial vessel/license violations were addressed.

Officers Delano, Beck, Mock, and Maggio were conducting targeted Joint Enforcement Action (JEA) patrol offshore of Sebastian Inlet. The officers stopped a vessel and conducted a resource inspection. The inspection revealed undersized dolphin (mahi mahi). The violation was handled accordingly.

Officer Balgo inspected a vessel at Bicentennial Boat Ramp. A resource and license inspection revealed the commercial harvester in possession of one undersized snook which was harvested by illegal method. The commercial harvester did not possess a valid saltwater product license or restricted species endorsement for the commercially harvested sheepshead. Citations were issued accordingly.

Officer Balgo was on foot patrol at Haulover Canal and conducted a resource inspection on an individual in possession of two undersized snook that were harvested by illegal method. The individual was also in possession of an undersized sheepshead and did not possess any valid licenses or permits. The individual was cited accordingly.

Lieutenant Lee and Officers Balgo, Hallsten, Owens, and Snyder conducted federal water patrol out of Port Canaveral. A resource inspection approximately 15 miles offshore revealed a vessel to be in possession of a speared oversized snook and two red snapper. The operator was charged with state and federal citations.

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Officer Delano conducted a resource inspection on the vessel that had three individuals on board. During the inspection Officer Delano measured a snook and noticed the tail had been cut, making the snook appear to be 32 inches. A thorough interview was conducted and the individual who harvested the snook admitted to cutting the tail to make it appear to be within the legal slot size limit. The subject was issued a criminal citation for the violation.

ORANGE COUNTY

Officers Mendelson and Humphrey were on airboat patrol along the St. John's River when they observed an individual cast netting along the shoreline. A resource inspection discovered several processed freshwater gamefish, including black bass and bluegill (panfish). It was determined that the fish were illegally harvested with the cast net and the subject was issued a Notice to Appear.

Officer Mendelson conducted land-based water patrol on the east shoreline of the St. John's River in Christmas. He observed two individuals across the river on the west shoreline fishing with a cast net and placing the netted fish into a blue bucket. Officer Mendelson approached the fishermen and conducted a resource inspection which

found black crappie, warmouth and bluegill that were harvested with the cast net. The individual in possession of the fish received a Notice to Appear for illegal method of take of freshwater gamefish. The other individual received a citation for no non-resident freshwater fishing license.

Officer Hocker conducted airboat patrol on the St. Johns River between Highway 50 and 520. He observed several groups of individuals cast netting just south of catfish hotel on the shoreline of the river. A resource inspection was conducted, and an American alligator was found hidden in a fish box. The individual that was throwing the cast net admitted to catching the alligator. He also did not have a valid freshwater fishing license. The individual was issued a Notice to Appear for attempting to take alligator out of season and the fishing license violation was addressed. The alligator was returned to the St. Johns River alive.

Officers Hocker and Hallsten conducted state water patrol on the St. Johns River at the Highway 50 airboat launch area. As Officer Hocker approached the bridge he noticed several individuals standing around two men cast netting. As he got closer, he observed one of the men hide a bucket under their vehicle. A resource and license inspection was conducted and found the subjects in possession of 26 gamefish illegally harvested with cast nets. The catch consisted of one black bass, seven warmouth, eight black crappie, two red breasted sunfish, four bluegill, and four red-eared sunfish (shellcrackers). Officer Hallsten arrived on scene and started identifying several of the individuals via rapid ID. The two individuals throwing the cast nets admitted to harvesting the gamefish. Neither of the individuals had valid freshwater fishing licenses. Both men were issued a Notice to Appear for illegally harvesting freshwater gamefish with a cast net and cited accordingly.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

HERNANDO COUNTY

Officers Moschiano and Holcomb were on vessel patrol and stopped a PWC for a safety violation. During the stop the subject showed signs of impairment. Field Sobriety Tasks were conducted, and the operator was arrested for BUI and transported to the Hernando County Jail. The PWC was turned over to a friend who was not impaired.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Officers Stephens, Karr and Adams responded to a report of suspicious activity on Lake Denton in Avon Park. The reporting party advised several subjects were trying to sink a Cessna plane fuselage and a twenty-foot cargo shipping container in the lake. FWC units responded and contacted approximately twelve subjects, all with scuba diving gear and equipment. The FWC Dive team responded the following morning to document the

location and condition of both items. After the team confirmed the items were in the lake and documented the exact GPS coordinates, the case was turned over to DEP Special Agent Jarosh. Once SA Jarosh completes the investigation, charges will be filed against the appropriate persons.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Officer Miller responded to a trespassing complaint in South Hillsborough County. While on scene he observed five males trespassing on private property. To access this area of Southwest Florida Water Management District lands, the men had to go through an unauthorized access point and pass through the property illegally. The suspects were actively fishing, and Officer Miller conducted a resource inspection with the assistance of Officer Hinds. During the inspection, Officer Miller found an undersized, out of season snook which was harvested by prohibited methods. Appropriate citations were issued for the violations.

LEE COUNTY

Officer Bell was conducting resource inspections at a local boat ramp. While inspecting a vessel, two undersized lane snapper were found in a live well. A notice to appear citation was issued to the subjects for the violation.

Officer Winton was on patrol in Estero Bay when he saw a vessel speeding and violating a posted manatee zone. A stop was conducted, and the vessel was determined to be a rental. The livery company had not provided the occupants with the required child-sized life jackets for the children onboard. Officer Winton went to the livery, interviewed the responsible employee and issued him a notice to appear for the violation.

Officers Price, Thompson and Johnson were on water patrol when they observed a vessel without the required navigation lights. They stopped the vessel to address the violation and to conduct a boating safety inspection. The operator showed signs of possible impairment and Officer Price conducted field sobriety exercises. The subject was arrested for boating under the influence and transported to jail.

Officer Furbay was on water patrol when he saw a commercial blue crab boat speeding through a manatee zone. A stop was conducted to address the violation and the vessel was found to be not registered for commercial use and did not have a blue crab or restricted species endorsement. Officer Zenoniani assisted by seizing approximately forty-six pounds of live blue crab and submitting evidence for future case presentation. Appropriate citations were issued.

MANATEE COUNTY

Officers Dalton, Wesche and Gonzales conducted a vessel stop near Jewfish Key after they observed the operator having difficulty maintaining steerage of the vessel. The

operator exhibited signs of impairment and Seated Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST's) were utilized. The operator refused to perform the tasks and was arrested for BUI. The operator also refused to provide a breath sample and had a record of a previous refusal. The operator was charged accordingly.

Officers Gonzales, Dalton, Wesche and Lieutenant McCorkle conducted a vessel stop on a PWC operating on a plane in a slow speed area. During the stop, the operator displayed signs of impairment. Seated Field Sobriety Tasks were utilized, and the operator was arrested for BUI. The subject became unconscious while being transported to the boat ramp and EMS was contacted. The subject eventually recovered, refused medical attention from the EMS team, and was transported to the county jail.

Officer Gonzales encountered two subjects at the south Skyway Fishing Pier in possession of four undersized red grouper. Both subjects were issued a notice to appear for possession of red grouper less than twenty inches in length.

Officers Klobuchar, Davidson and Captive Wildlife Lieutenant Hinds participated in a joint detail with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The detail targeted trespassers on a federally protected bird sanctuary known as Passage Key. Passage Key is an important nesting site for many shore birds and is posted with numerous signs warning boaters to stay off the beach. Despite the abundance of signage, boaters still walk the shoreline, sometimes with dogs off leashes, disturbing nesting sites and kicking up the birds. During the detail, 20 federal citations and 47 verbal warnings were given for trespassing on federally protected lands. Several boating safety citations and warnings were also issued.

PASCO COUNTY

Officer Petru was on water patrol near the Anclote sandbar when he observed a vessel operating erratically. He stopped the vessel to conduct a boating safety inspection and the operator exhibited signs of impairment. Seated Field Sobriety Tasks were utilized, and the operator was arrested for boating under the influence and transported to jail.

Senior Officer Pulaski was on water patrol in the area of Gulf Harbors and stopped a vessel to conduct a boating safety inspection. During the inspection the operator exhibited signs of impairment. Field sobriety tasks were utilized, and the operator was arrested for boating under the influence and transported to the Pasco County Jail.

Senior Officer Pulaski, Lieutenant Wells and Lieutenant Parisoe were on offshore patrol west of the Pithlachascotee River. They observed several vessels engaged in fishing. A resource inspection of one vessel revealed several undersize hogfish. The fish were seized as evidence and the subjects were issued citations accordingly.

Officer Specialist Tsongranis and Senior Officer Pulaski responded to a marina in Hudson Beach regarding a single vessel accident that occurred in Hudson Beach Channel. The vessel had struck a channel marker and sustained significant damage; however, no one was injured. Senior Officer Pulaski is completing a boating accident report.

PINELLAS COUNTY

While on land patrol, Officer Specialist Bibeau observed a fishing vessel return to a nearby boat ramp. Officer Specialist Bibeau contacted the operator of the vessel and conducted a fisheries inspection. The inspection revealed two undersized greater amberjacks and citations were issued accordingly.

While on water patrol, Officer Specialist Bibeau observed a vessel on a plane in a slow speed zone. Officer Specialist Bibeau stopped the vessel and conducted a boating safety inspection. The operator exhibited signs of impairment and seated field sobriety tasks were conducted. The operator was arrested for boating under the influence.

POLK COUNTY

Officer Carter conducted a safety inspection of a vessel while on Lake Eloise. The operator exhibited signs of possible impairment and refused to complete sobriety tasks. The subject was arrested for BUI and taken to the Polk County Jail.

Officer Franks and Lieutenant Bontrager received a call from dispatch regarding persons trespassing on private property and possibly cast-netting fish. Two vehicles were found and stopped on the property. The drivers admitted to illegally entering the property by driving next to a set of railroad tracks that allow entry into the property. Both trucks had approximately ten pounds of tilapia fish in plain view in the truck beds. Both drivers were given a notice to appear for trespassing.

Officer Earls and Officer Munkwitz were patrolling the Winter Haven Chain of Lakes when they observed a vessel operating with no visible registration. A vessel stop was conducted, and the operator exhibited signs of impairment. Sobriety tasks were utilized, and the subject was arrested for BUI and transported to the Polk County Jail.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

LEE COUNTY

Officer Winton conducted directed conservation patrol in Koreshan State Park which included speed enforcement due to citizen complaints of vehicles driving over the posted limit. He observed a vehicle speeding and driving the wrong way down the park roadway. A traffic stop was conducted, and the driver did not have a valid license. The driver was issued a notice to appear for the license violation, a resource citation for unlawful speed in a state park and additional traffic warnings.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

LEE COUNTY

Officer Parker was on patrol in Lee County when she responded to a report of a fledgling osprey hopping from car to car in a Costco parking lot. When she arrived, the officer found the young osprey, in distress, sitting on top of a truck. Officer Parker successfully captured the osprey, without harm, and turned it over to the Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW).

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Norbrothen observed a vehicle traveling in the opposite direction approximately 20 mph below the speed limit and illuminating a flashlight from the passenger window. The officer made a U-turn and followed the vehicle for approximately 3 miles at slow speed. The vehicle swerved several times over lane markers, all while still illuminating the flashlight at the road easement and the woods and wetlands beyond. These are common areas for deer, and the light could have easily disclosed their presence. A traffic stop was conducted and found a loaded .22 LR rifle within reach of the passenger, a box of .22 LR ammunition at the passenger's feet, one flashlight in the passenger's hand and two flashlights within arm's reach of the passenger. The driver received a criminal citation for driving on a suspended license and a citation for crossing a solid white line. The passenger received a criminal citation for attempting to use a gun and light to take deer at night out of season.

Officer Pecko was on patrol at the Stuart Causeway when he observed several individuals loading cast nets into a vehicle. A resource inspection revealed two undersized snook. The subject did not have a valid saltwater fishing license or snook stamp. He was cited accordingly.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

While on patrol of Dupuis WEA the day before legal wild hog season, Officer Norbrothen observed an individual wearing a camouflage long sleeved shirt and brush pants and carrying a rifle. The individual received a criminal citation for hunting wild hog out-of-season.

K9 Officer Delatorre was on land patrol in the vicinity of the Dupris Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when he observed a vehicle parked at a gate leading into the WMA. The officer noticed several gun cases and gear associated with hunting. At that time, the

WMA was not open for any type of legal hunting. Officer Delatorre utilized K9 Diesel and located four individuals approximately two miles into the woods. All four individuals were armed with shotguns and pistols. The individuals were wearing camouflage clothing and orange vests. A citation was issued to each subject for hunting in the Dupris WMA during a time when it was closed for hunting.

Lieutenant Warne was on patrol in the J.W Corbett Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when he observed two ATV's traveling down trail 11. Lieutenant Warne stopped the ATV's and determined they entered the area by going around a closed / locked gate. The area was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the possession or use of ATV's is prohibited in J.W Corbett year-round. The two individuals were cited accordingly.

Officer Brodbeck was on vessel patrol near Palm Beach Inlet when a subject was observed operating his vessel in a careless and erratic manner. A vessel stop was initiated to check on the wellbeing of the operator and conduct a boating safety inspection. The operator exhibited signs of impairment and seated field sobriety tasks were utilized. The operator was arrested for BUI and transported to the Palm Beach County Jail.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck was on vessel patrol near Palm Beach Inlet when two swimmers were observed who appeared to be in distress, attempting to swim against a strong tidal current. Officer Brodbeck and a second vessel quickly got to the swimmers and pulled them aboard. One swimmer had already sustained minor injuries caused by barnacles and oysters and was bleeding from multiple lacerations on her leg. The other was exhausted from swimming against the current, but otherwise uninjured. The swimmers came from a nearby anchored vessel. Officer Brodbeck contacted the occupants of the vessel, all of whom had been consuming alcohol. The owner of the vessel was unaware that the swimmers were in any distress. Officer Brodbeck issued the vessel owner boating citations for no dive flag and insufficient number of PFD's on board. Warnings were issued for providing alcohol to persons under 21 years of age and for not having any type IV throwable. The injured swimmer refused medical treatment; however, Officer Brodbeck advised her to seek treatment on her own due to the high potential of infection from injuries caused by marine organisms.

Officer Brodbeck was on vessel patrol responding to a report of a boating accident near Lake Worth. Just after sunset, while searching for evidence of a vessel collision, the officer observed what appeared to be an overturned kayak. Upon approaching the kayak which had a large hole in the bottom, the officer discovered two individuals struggling to keep their heads above water. Another vessel arrived on scene, which had a swim platform at water level and the operator was able to assist in recovering the individuals from the water. The individuals were transferred to Officer Brodbeck's

vessel, where it was determined they were exhausted but otherwise uninjured. The officer recovered the kayak and transported the individuals to paramedics with Palm Beach County Fire Rescue for further evaluation and care.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck was dispatched to a call regarding an injured great blue heron at a residence in Boynton Beach. Upon arrival, the officer located the bird, which appeared to be in poor health. Officer Brodbeck captured and transported the bird to Busch Wildlife Sanctuary in Jupiter for treatment. Once the bird had been dropped off, another call was received regarding an injured sea turtle near Pennock Point on the Loxahatchee River. Officer Brodbeck arrived on scene and located the small green sea turtle near the shoreline moving very slowly. The officer waded into the water and was able to capture the turtle. The injured sea turtle was transported to Loggerhead Marine Life Center in Juno Beach for treatment.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Fernandez and Investigator Taboas responded to a complaint of an individual trapping migratory birds. The subject was gone when they arrived to the location but found the subject's residence. They observed the suspect remove two illegal bird traps containing buntings from his vehicle. A search of the property revealed several other buntings in his possession. Four indigo buntings and one painted bunting were seized and released to the wild. Seven misdemeanor citations were issued for the violations.

Officer Perez was conducting water patrol at Biscayne Bay, in the vicinity of the intercoastal waterway and Broad Causeway, when he noticed a vessel with fishing rods and two males onboard. Upon conducting a fisheries inspection, he found two undersize mutton snapper, one undersize African pompano, two mutton snapper and one yellow tail snapper not in whole condition. The subjects were cited accordingly.

Officer Cartaya was on water patrol in a marked vessel when he observed a boater operating on plane in a posted slow speed minimum wake manatee zone. During the stop, the operator exhibited signs of possible impairment. Officer Cartaya conducted field sobriety tasks and the operator was arrested for BUI and transported to the Turner Gilford Knight correctional facility.

MONROE COUNTY

CASES

FWC/NOAA worked a case after being alerted through the Vessel Monitoring System that a commercial fishing boat was in the Tortugas Ecological Reserve South, taking advantage of the full moon spawn at Riley's Hump. "The Twister" with three crew on board was found with approximately 1,000 pounds of snapper and grouper, which was seized and sold to a local fish house. The boat's operation was terminated. The boat and crew were escorted to Key West and the boat owner was given a federal citation.

Officer Jacobs was patrolling in the area of Davis Reef SPA. He observed two individuals in the water with spearguns, within the sanctuary boundaries. Upon initiating a resource inspection, Officer Jacobs found the individuals in possession of a speared, undersized mutton snapper. Officer Jacobs charged the individuals accordingly.

COLLIER COUNTY

CASES

Officers Kleis and Araujo recovered an unoccupied stolen sailboat. The person listed as a suspect in the theft of the sailboat was seen by Marco Police Officers at a local marina. The vessel owner was contacted and Officer Kleis confirmed that he wanted to press charges. Officer Kleis placed the suspect under arrest for grand theft and he was transported the Collier County Jail.

Officer Oldsen conducted a vessel stop and discovered a subject actively filleting a gray snapper. The subject was also in possession of an undersized redfish. The subject was cited accordingly.

Investigator Mattson was preparing for water patrol when he received a phone call from Offshore Patrol Vessel Officers Richards and Foell. They located a 55-meter vessel cruising inside the ATBA (Federal Area to be Avoided). The officers were in Key West and saw the vessel tracking on the AIS system. Investigator Mattson intercepted the vessel "Nomad" off Tennessee Reef and collected all pertinent information from the vessel captain. The information will be forwarded to National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration Office of Law Enforcement for processing the federal citation.

Officer Plussa observed a large gathering of ATVs in a residential area. As he approached the group, several operators drove away. An operator who stayed at the scene showed signs of impairment. He was arrested for DUI and booked into the Naples Jail Center. The operator was also issued several other traffic related citations.

While working land patrol at Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park, Officer Plussa observed a truck speeding in the wrong direction almost causing collisions with other park patrons. The officer stopped the operator who had an active warrant out of Tennessee and a revoked driver license. The appropriate law enforcement action was taken accordingly.

Officers Conroy, Yurewitch and Lieutenant Mahoney were on water patrol and observed a vessel operator not maintaining a proper lookout and driving in the middle of the channel. Officer Conroy stopped the vessel to conduct a safety inspection. The operator showed signs of impairment and was arrested for boating under the influence with minors aboard and transported to the Naples Jail Center.

Officer Kleis, Lieutenant Balfour and Captain Laskowski were on water patrol during the annual canoe race event. They observed a vessel leave the crowded area and shoot a large rooster tail towards other vessels. The vessel then violated a restricted speed zone, was operating carelessly, and violated a manatee zone. The vessel was stopped to address the violations and to conduct a safety inspection. The operator exhibited signs of impairment and field sobriety exercises were utilized. The subject was arrested for BUI booked into the Collier County Jail Center.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Plussa was on water patrol in the area of Delnor-Wiggins State Park in response to repeated reports of personal watercraft (PWC's) violating manatee slow speed zones and speeding near other boaters. Several operators of PWC's were found in violation of the speed laws and were citations and warnings accordingly.

Officer Plussa observed a personal watercraft violating a slow speed, minimum wake manatee zone and carelessly speeding in between boats that were adhering to the speed zone near Wiggins Pass. The PWC operator was not wearing a personal flotation device (PFD) or a kill switch lanyard, as required. Officer Plussa stopped the operator to address the violations. A combination of citations and written warnings were issued accordingly.

Lieutenant Mahoney observed people trespassing behind a posted "No Trespassing" sign in the Fiddler's Creek neighborhood canal along CR-951. The subjects were observed fishing in Fiddler's Creek pond. Lieutenant Mahoney, Officer Plussa and community security personnel trespassed three juveniles from the property. Two of the three were issued warnings for no fishing license.