

FWC DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT FIELD OPERATIONS

**WEEKLY REPORT
July 10 – 16, 2009**

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

NORTHWEST REGION

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

On July 11, Officer Fred Rondeau and Lieutenant Brian Lambert were working the Blue Angel Air Show. They observed a personal watercraft violating the idle speed zone in Little Sabine. Officer Rondeau stopped the vessel and observed several signs that the operator was under the influence of alcohol. Officer Rondeau had the operator of the vessel complete several field sobriety tasks. The operator of the vessel performed poorly on most all the tasks. Officer Rondeau arrested and transported the operator to the Escambia County Jail. The operator agreed to give a sample of his breath which resulted in .132 / .133 g/210L. The operator was also cited for violation of an idle speed zone.

On July 11, while docking their vessel with the above boating under the influence (BUI) subject, Lieutenant Brian Lambert and Officer Fred Rondeau heard occupants of another vessel blow an air horn and scream. This vessel was returning to the adjacent Bayou Texar boat ramp. Lieutenant Lambert checked the vessel's safety equipment after it was loaded on a trailer. The operator of the vessel showed signs of impairment and was asked to perform several field sobriety tasks. The operator did poorly on the task and was arrested for BUI. After Lieutenant Lambert transported the individual to the Escambia County Jail, a sample of the operator's breath resulted in .127 / .137 g/210L.

On July 11, Officer Fred Rondeau and Lieutenant Brian Lambert were working in the Quietwater Beach area. Officer Rondeau stopped a vessel to perform a boating safety check. It was found that the operator did not have sufficient life jackets for the vessel. While issuing a citation for the violation, Officer Rondeau noticed the operator was displaying several signs of impairment. Officer Rondeau had the operator complete several field sobriety tasks. The operator performed poorly on these tasks and was arrested for BUI. The operator was transported to the Escambia County Jail. The operator agreed to give a breath sample which resulted in .128 / .132 g/210L.

On July 11, officers were patrolling the Little Sabine area of Santa Rosa Sound when they observed a vessel violating the no wake zone. Once the vessel stopped, officers conducted a boating safety check. During this check, officers noticed the operator was having trouble understanding directions and locating the required safety gear. Realizing that she may be under the influence of alcohol, officers took her ashore and requested that she conduct several field sobriety tasks. After failing these tasks, the operator was placed under arrest for operating a vessel under the influence.

On July 11, Officers Steve Bartlett and Matt Webb were patrolling in the Quietwater Beach area. They stopped a vessel and noticed the operator showed signs of impairment. After performing poorly on several field sobriety tasks, Officer Webb arrested the individual for BUI. The individual was transported to the Escambia County Jail where he refused to give a breath sample.

On July 11, Officers David Jernigan and Kenneth Manning were on water patrol in the Big Lagoon area when they observed a vessel almost collide with another vessel. After making contact with the operator, they observed indicators of impairment. Officer Jernigan arrested the man for BUI. The man later refused to submit to a test of his breath.

On July 11, Officer Faris Livesay and Lieutenant Dan Hahr were on water patrol in the Little Sabine area when the Coast Guard notified them that they had located a juvenile subject who was operating a vessel and appeared to be under the influence of alcohol. They responded and

found a 16-year-old and a 17-year-old in possession of a cooler full of beer. Both had been drinking. Field sobriety tasks revealed that the subject was not impaired, but both subjects were issued notices to appear for juvenile court for possession of alcoholic beverages by a minor. While dealing with the two juveniles on the shore of Little Sabine, two men drove up in a small dinghy and parked next to the officers' patrol vessel. When the operator walked past the Coast Guard officer that was assisting, the Coast Guard officer asked him if he was going to leave his vessel there. The man responded that he was just going to discard the garbage bag full of beer cans he was carrying and that he would get the boat later. The man's speech was so slurred that it was obvious that he was impaired. Lieutenant Hahr conducted field sobriety tasks and concluded that the man was severely impaired. The man was arrested for BUI and transported to the jail where he refused to submit to a test of his breath.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

On July 11, Lieutenant Dan Hahr returned to the Santa Rosa Sound area after booking a subject for BUI to assist Officer Fred Rondeau and Lieutenant Brian Lambert with another BUI. While waiting at the Shoreline Park boat ramp, a vessel returned to the ramp. As the operator operated the vessel towards the ramp, he struck the dock, throwing another male passenger to the deck. A subsequent safety inspection revealed that the operator was impaired. He was transported to the Santa Rosa County Jail where his breath was tested at .251 g/210L. He was booked for BUI.

On July 13, Officer Ben Pineda responded to a crab trap molestation complaint. Lieutenant Dan Hahr and Officer Kenneth Manning responded to assist. They located the suspect's vessel at a nearby boat ramp and set up surveillance. One of the suspects returned to the ramp by vehicle and picked up the truck and trailer. The officers followed him to another boat ramp where they observed a broken down vessel. The two men admitted that they and two other subjects had looked at some crab traps but left the crabs in them. An inspection of the vessel revealed rotten fish parts and two blue crab legs. After tracking down one of the other suspects, Officer Manning obtained a written statement in which the man admitted to pulling the traps and looking at them. Charges will be sought against the men for molesting crab traps.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

DUVAL COUNTY

On July 10, while on water patrol in the St. Johns River, Officers Robert Brienza and Roland Green almost ran into an unlit canoe with three people on board. The officers escorted the vessel to the nearest dock to conduct a safety inspection. Of the multiple violations, one was for insufficient PFD's. Appropriate citations were issued. During the vessel inspection, it was discovered the occupants had a flashlight on board that no one thought to use.

On July 10th, Officer Sandra Blackburn was on land patrol in the Little Jetties Park after hours. She observed a vehicle parked near the footpath leading out to the jetties. As she exited her vehicle, she could hear people talking. As she started walking down the footpath, the talking suddenly stopped. She heard a rustling sound. Using her flashlight, she lit the path and saw a young child standing next to a cart with a large cooler and some fishing poles. To the right of the cart was a man (the young child's father) running away from where his child was standing. He appeared to be carrying something fairly heavy. Officer Blackburn ordered the man to stop and when he finally stopped and turned around, she saw a bucket and the tail of a Redfish. The man said the fish measured 29" and when he saw Officer Blackburn, he was going to dump the

fish. The fish measured 31" total length. Inspection of the cooler revealed a variety of other regulated fish, all of which were the legal size limits. A citation was issued for the oversize redfish and the fish was released alive. The man was also issued a warning for trespassing.

TAYLOR COUNTY

With the close of the first week of scallop season, Taylor County Officers checked over 700 vessels and 3,000 users attempting to harvest the tasty Bay Scallop. During their Gulf of Mexico patrols, Taylor County crews apprehended 19 vessels with over the bag limit of scallops.

NORTHEAST REGION

BREVARD COUNTY

On July 15, at approximately 3 a.m., Officer Kris Culver was on land patrol on the north side of Sebastian Inlet and noticed five men fishing on the rocks. When the men finished fishing, Officer Culver approached them to conduct a fisheries inspection. He found the men were in possession of three snook during closed season. Each fish had been placed in a black trash bag, folded, and placed into a backpack. Each man was issued a citation and were free to leave on their own recognizance.

FLAGLER COUNTY

Officer Eric Meade and a FWC investigator responded to a citizen's complaint at Hammock Dunes Bridge in Palm Coast in reference to fishermen keeping undersize fish. The officers issued one fisherman a citation for possession of undersize gag grouper and a warning for possession of undersize mangrove snapper.

LAKE COUNTY

On July 11, Officer Jared Beard conducted a resource inspection on a vessel at the Marsh Park boat ramp. He found the subject in possession of three undersized black bass, two measured 12 and one 13 inches. Officer Beard issued the subject a citation for undersized black bass, seized the fish and donated them to the Lisbon Church of God.

MARION COUNTY

Lt. Kevin Steinke observed a vessel with a bow rider approach the Carney Island boat ramp on Lake Weir. While making contact with the operator and occupants on the vessel, it became very evident the operator was possibly impaired. Two occupants on the vessel were vomiting and there were 33 empty beer cans on the floor of the vessel. The operator showed signs of being under the influence and was asked to perform field sobriety tasks. The operator performed the tasks for Officer Joe Simpson and was then transported to the county jail. His breath test results were .175 and .185 on the Intoxilyzer. He was booked into the jail for BUI.

Officers John Wilke, Mike Burke, Wayne Hargabus, Wash Wear, Joe Simpson and Lt. Steinke responded to Lake Katherine in the Ocala National Forest to the report of a search and rescue. A 44-year old man and his 18-year old son were fishing when their canoe capsized. The father tried to retrieve a paddle and could not make it back to the overturned canoe. The son swam to shore and ran to a house for assistance. The Marion County dive team was called in but the father could not be located that evening. Officers Hargabus and Simpson remained on scene

with the family until the following morning. That morning, the body of the father was located approximately 50 yards off shore by a Marion County dive team member. FWC investigators have taken over the investigation.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

On July 13, Officer Don Meurlot approached a sports utility vehicle in tow with a trailer and a personal watercraft (PWC) attempting to launch at the River Front Boat Ramp in South Daytona. The adult male operator stepped from the vehicle and Officer Meurlot could smell a strong odor of burnt cannabis coming from inside the vehicle. When asked, the operator stated that it smelled like “weed” because he had just smoked a joint and had a little left in the PWC. The operator waived his Miranda rights and retrieved a baggy of cannabis from the PWC. After consent, a plastic bottle containing 80 Roxicodone pills and 28 Percocet pills was located in the PWC and another plastic baggy with cannabis was located in the console of the vehicle. The operator stated it all belonged to him and could not produce a prescription for either of the pills. He was arrested on three separate felony charges, possession of prescribed medication(s), and possession of greater than 20 grams of cannabis, then transported to the county branch jail.

SOUTHWEST REGION

LEE COUNTY

On July 10, the Lee County Sherriff’s Office notified FWC dispatch of a traffic stop involving a deputy who had discovered a dead alligator in the trunk of a vehicle. The operator failed to produce a valid driver’s license and was therefore going to be booked into jail. Officer Jonathan Ruggiero responded and issued the subject a citation for possession of the alligator. The subject would not disclose the circumstances regarding how he obtained possession of the six-foot alligator.

On July 10, Officers Adam Resnick and Demian McColgin worked speed enforcement in the panther zone. There were a total of 11 citations issued with the highest recorded speed of 83 miles-per-hour in a marked 45 mile-per-hour zone. The recently purchased laser equipment has helped officers work these zones more effectively.

On July 13, Officers Greg Bryson and Jay Ewing spoke at a Fort Myers Beach Summer Youth Camp. They gave a presentation on boating safety and manatee habitats to 50 children ranging in age from 6 to 13 years-of-age. The officers expressed the importance of wearing a life jacket and slowing down for manatees while boating.

POLK COUNTY

On July 11, Officers Adonious Duhart and Stephen Judah observed a suspicious person standing on the side of a road near Fort Meade. The officers approached the subject after they observed him walking back and forth from the road, into the tree line, then attempting to flag down passing vehicles. When Officer Judah identified himself, the subject threw down a crumpled piece of paper that he had been holding. Officer Judah retrieved the piece of paper and discovered it contained what appeared to be crack cocaine. After conducting a presumptive field test on the substance, which was positive for cocaine, Officer Judah arrested the subject for possession of cocaine and for violation of probation.

SOUTH REGION A

BROWARD COUNTY

On July 10, Officer Robert Kuester was on patrol when he parked on a bridge adjacent to the Hillsboro canal. He observed a subject who had been fishing, running in his direction while carrying a snook. The subject was cited for possession of snook during closed season.

On July 10, Officer Alford received a call that subjects were attempting to carry live rock off of a cruise ship that had just returned from the Bahamas. The rock was seized and the subjects were issued a federal citation.

GLADES COUNTY

On July 11, Officer David Burnsed was on airboat patrol in Lake Okeechobee when he received a call about an overdue airboat with three occupants on board. Officer Burnsed, along with two civilian vessels, started to search the area. Due to the broad search area and the approach of poor weather, Officer Burnsed requested aerial support from the United States Coast Guard (USCG). A helicopter was dispatched. Lieutenant Eddie Brown and Officers Greg Louque and Sulin Schafer launched two more airboats to assist with the search. The USCG helicopter located the airboat stuck in thick vegetation and relayed their position to patrol vessels. Officer Burnsed and the two civilian vessels approached as close as they could and then walked the rest of the way to the location. Officer Burnsed found the occupants of the stranded airboat to be in good health and assisted with their recovery.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

On July 3, Officers A.J. Maynard and Sulin Schafer were patrolling Slim's Fish Camp in Belle Glade, when they observed a subject at the fish cleaning table intentionally feeding the alligators. The subject explained he was feeding the alligators because people visiting from Georgia wanted to see the creatures up close. Camp residents have made several complaints about people feeding the alligators causing them to become acclimated to humans. Officer Schafer issued the subject a citation for the violation.

On July 4, Lieutenant Brown was on water patrol when he stopped to conduct a resource check on a subject fishing from a vessel. The subject stated he had fish on board but was ready to release them; he just wanted to see how many he could catch. Lt. Brown found the subject in possession of four, undersize black bass and cited him for the violation.

On July 9, Officers AJ Maynard and Sulin Schafer were on water patrol in Lake Okeechobee when they observed and stopped a vessel with three subjects on board. The subjects showed the officers the fish they had on board but made no mention of any others. However, the officers noticed a piece of string tied to the side of the vessel. Officer Maynard grabbed the string and retrieved a submerged wire basket that was tied to it. The basket contained several bream and one undersize black bass. Officer Maynard issued one subject a citation for the violation.

On July 12, Officer Sulin Schafer was on water patrol near Slim's Fish Camp when she spotted three subjects aboard a vessel. Officer Schafer conducted a boating safety inspection and noted some deficiencies. One subject told the officer that there was a bass on board that he had caught. Officer Schafer measured the fish and found it to be undersize. She issued a citation for the undersize fish and warnings for other violations.

SOUTH REGION B

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Greg Stastny and Lieutenant Wayne Maahs assisted Marco Island Fire Rescue during a search and rescue mission for three subjects stranded on a mud flat south of the island. The officers utilized an airboat to locate them approximately 3/4 of a mile from any navigable water. All three subjects were suffering from dehydration and transported to safety.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

On July 10, Officers Mike Albert and Erik Sullivan were conducting a fisheries enforcement detail at the Coral Gables Waterway, near the Cocoplum traffic circle. While Officer Albert was in plain clothes "blending in" with other fishermen, the uniformed Officer Sullivan started to approach a subject to check his catch. That subject threw his fish in the water while being approached by the officer. The subject then became unruly and extremely vulgar when asked for identification. He stated that FWC had stopped him before (true- a warning had been issued for a prior resource violation) and that "we should know who he was." The subject was handcuffed but not before threatening the officers with the fact that he would not be taken to jail. The subject was arrested for interference with an FWC officer, resisting arrest without violence and disorderly intoxication. At the jail, the subject threatened to kill the next FWC officer that he encounters. He was also cited for littering.

On July 11, Broward County's Lieutenant Laubenberger and Officer Thomas Enos assisted Miami-Dade County Officer Mike Albert by responding to Haulover Inlet. Officer Albert had been conducting surveillance on a subject that had caught a snook, placed it in his vehicle, and then returned to fish some more. Officer Enos was able to identify and cite the subject for possession of snook during closed season and failure to possess a non-resident saltwater fishing license.

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Joshua Peters and Steve Dion cited several subjects for interference with the duties of an officer, with one subject receiving additional citations for possession of undersize fish. The operator of the suspect vessel refused to stop when the officers attempted to stop him while displaying blue lights and siren. The operator drove the vessel at a high speed through the City of Key West marina anchorage while the passenger retrieved the fish from the cooler and tossed them into the water.

Officers Mike Millilo and Chris Mattson conducted surveillance on several divers with spear guns along the Channel Five Bridge. One subject attempted to dump a speared snook when the officers approached him. During the encounter, one of the subjects produced his out-of-state fishing license, stating he thought it would be valid in Florida. He was arrested and cited for spearfishing in the Upper Keys, possession of an undersized, speared, closed-season snook and failure to possess a Florida saltwater fishing license.

Officer Janette Fernandez assisted a multi-agency effort to remove trap and fishing debris from the Card Sound area. John Ricisak of Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resource Management said of Officer Fernandez, "It was a huge success with a total of 621 traps removed. We couldn't have done it without your participation and support. I think everyone was really impressed by your willingness to get right in there and get the job done."

Officers Anders Bergstrom and Jill Izsak, along with Lieutenant Roy Payne, were on patrol at Shark Key when a vessel stop resulted in the issuance of five citations for possession of undersize, closed season lobster, no measuring device, possession of closed season stone crab, and interference with the duties of a law enforcement officer. The operator of the vessel was also issued an "interference" citation. When the officers attempted to stop the vessel, the operator refused while the passenger dumped a large orange fish basket overboard. The officers were still able to recover four undersize lobster and two stone crab claws.

Officers Joshua Greenier and Jill Izsak responded to a queen conch complaint at Key Colony Beach. They identified four queen conch shells on the dock, but the animals inside were dead. The out-of-state residents stated they had just received their diving certification and wanted to take the shells home with them. One citation was issued for possession of queen conch. One of the subjects was arrested for an active DUI warrant.

Officers Joshua Greenier, Jill Izsak and James Johnson responded to assist U. S. Coast Guard with a BUI investigation arising from a vessel grounding that occurred at Eastern Dry Rocks. The operator was arrested after field sobriety tasks and test results indicated that he was legally impaired.

Officers Joshua Peters and Steve Dion issued citations to a subject at Harris Gap Channel Bridge for possession of undersize, closed season lobster and no measuring device. They also received warnings for failure to display a diver down flag. Both subjects denied harvesting lobster but circumstances indicated otherwise.

Officer Anders Bergstrom issued a citation to a subject for possession of goliath grouper, a prohibited species, during a vessel stop bayside of Marathon.