

FWC DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT FIELD OPERATIONS

**WEEKLY REPORT
July 3 – 9, 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

In Pensacola Bay, Officer Keith Clark checked an individual in a canoe who was in possession of an undersize flounder. A notice to appear citation was issued.

Officer Fred Rondeau checked some individuals fishing from a vessel in Bayou Texar and found one in possession of two undersize black drum. A notice to appear citation was issued.

Lieutenant Doug Berryman and Officer Ben Pineda were on water patrol conducting fisheries inspections at Pensacola Pass. At approximately 8:30 p.m., they initiated a stop of a 31-foot Contender returning from a fishing trip in the Gulf. Initially, the vessel failed to stop while the officers observed two of the four occupants attempting to hide something in the back of the boat. After approximately one minute, the vessel captain stopped the boat, allowing the officers to board and conduct a fisheries inspection. The officers located several legal amberjack, grouper and snapper in a fish box in the front of the boat. In the rear of the boat, officers located a small cooler containing several fish fillets from undersize fish. A few minutes later, Lieutenant Brian Lambert and Officer Keith Clark arrived to assist. Officer Clark identified the fillets as six greater amberjack fillets, four red grouper fillets and two red snapper fillets. A notice to appear was issued to all four subjects for failure to land fish in whole condition and possession of undersize red snapper.

Officer Keith Clark checked a vessel in Perdido Key and found the operator in possession of undersize red snapper. A notice to appear citation was issued.

Officers John Bell, Kenneth Manning, Faris Livesay and Lieutenant Brian Lambert responded to a serious vessel accident involving two personal watercrafts (PWCs) near Pensacola Beach. Two adult male operators, visiting from Tennessee, collided almost head-on. The adult operator of one PWC was airlifted to Baptist Hospital with head injuries and the 12-year-old passenger was transported to Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola for facial injuries. The operator and rider of the second PWC were not injured. The vessel accident is under investigation with charges pending.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY COPS

Captain Mary Sumner, Lieutenant Brian Lambert and Officer Fred Rondeau attended a meeting at the U.S. Coast Guard Station in Pensacola regarding waterborne assets and response planning for the 2009 Blue Angels Air Show scheduled for the Pensacola Beach area on July 10-11.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

On July 4, Officer Steve Hoomes and Lieutenant Dan Hahr were on water patrol of the Blackwater River working the nighttime fireworks detail near Milton. They observed a vessel ahead of them stop and then observed the navigation lights turn off. As the officers approached the vessel, they observed a man and woman standing and kissing. The couple did not appear to notice the officers until they were within 20 feet of the vessel. When asked about the navigation lights, the male operator stated that he had just turned them off. During the initial contact, the officers noticed several indicators of impairment and the operator stated that he had consumed a six-pack of beer. The officers escorted the vessel to the nearby Riverwalk where Officer Hoomes conducted field sobriety tasks. After performing poorly, the man was arrested for boating under the influence (BUI) and then he became belligerent. Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office responded and transported the subject to the county jail where he refused to give a sample of his breath. The subject was booked for BUI.

Officer Royce Johnson and Reserve Officer Lila Wise were on water patrol on the Blackwater River conducting boating safety equipment checks. Upon stopping a vessel operated by a 19-year-old male, the officers noticed indicators of impairment. The officers escorted the vessel operator to the nearby docks where they conducted field sobriety tasks. The vessel operator performed very poorly on the tasks and was arrested for boating under the influence (BUI). He was transported to the Santa Rosa County Jail where he refused to give a sample of his breath and was booked for BUI.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Matt Webb and Captain Mary Sumner were on water patrol at Destin Pass checking incoming off-shore fishing vessels when an inspection of a returning vessel yielded undersize trigger fish. Officer Webb issued a citation for the violation.

Officer Matt Webb conducted fishery inspections on two vessels in Destin Pass. The inspection revealed undersize gag grouper on one of the vessels and undersize red grouper on the other. The vessel captains were cited for the fish violations.

Investigator Eddie Gatlin, Officers Danny Arnette and Van Barrow organized a detail on the Shoal River after receiving numerous complaints about illegal drug use and litter violations from numerous people gathering on a sandbar along the river. Numerous contacts were made and the officers discussed the importance of not littering and boating safety with everyone gathered along the river. Citations were issued for littering and boating safety violations.

BAY COUNTY

Officer Mark Clements was on water patrol on Deerpoint Lake when he observed a subject quickly hiding something as he approached their boat. The item hidden was a can of beer with nine more unopened cans found in a cooler. None of the subjects in the boat was of legal age to consume alcohol and further inspection found a small

amount of cannabis and rolling papers. Citations for possession of the cannabis and alcohol were issued.

Officer Joe Chambers checked a fisher under the Hathaway Bridge who failed to have a fishing license and was also found to have an outstanding arrest warrant from Leon County for violation of probation. Further investigation revealed a container of cannabis and a brass pipe. The fisher was transported to the Bay County Jail and charged accordingly.

Lieutenant Jay Chesser and Officer Mike Nobles checked three divers who weren't displaying a diver's down flag. The subjects were in possession of stone crab claws which were undersize and out of season. One of the divers did not have a fishing license. A citation was issued for harvesting stone crabs out of season and written warnings were issued for the remaining violations.

Officers Dennis Palmer and Mark Clements were on water patrol when they inspected a vessel and found a fisherman in possession of seven undersize spotted sea trout. A citation was issued.

GULF COUNTY

Gulf County and Bay County officers worked the opening of scallop season on St. Joe Bay. Activity was high and scallops were plentiful. No major incidents occurred, however, numerous violations were documented. They ranged from no divers down flag violations to over-the-bag limit cases. The bulk of the violations were for no fishing license and boating safety violations. A total of 59 citations and 95 warnings were issued.

LEON COUNTY

Officer Billy Kemp and Reserve Officer Donald Trussell were patrolling the Aucilla River near Mandalay. They checked a commercial Carolina Skiff with three persons onboard. The fishermen had several flounder, sheepshead and a tripletail. The tripletail was undersize. The fish were photographed and then released. The commercial fisherman was cited for the violation.

On July 4 at approximately 11:25 p.m., Officer Chris Jones was on patrol at Luther Hall Landing on Lake Talquin. Officer Jones observed a vessel with three persons onboard, approach the landing without bow or stern lights. Officer Jones advised the operator of the violations. During a boating safety inspection on the vessel, the operator showed signs of impairment. Officer Jones issued a citation for the lighting violation and conducted field sobriety tasks on the operator, which he failed. The operator refused to take the breath test and was placed under arrest for boating under the influence (BUI). He has five prior arrests for driving under the influence (DUI). An inspection of the vessel revealed 22 empty beer cans. The operator also advised that he had been

drinking at a local bar and grill on Lake Talquin. He was transported to the Leon County Jail.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CITRUS COUNTY

After two weeks of planning, FWC Officers, Citrus County Sheriff's Office and State Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms agents worked a joint detail on King's Bay to target underage drinking in a local party spot called the "Shallows." On July 4th, undercover officers from all three agencies were placed in the large crowd for several hours and identified violations. Uniform officers with FWC, CCSO and ABT were paired up in marked patrol boats. Marked units responded together and cited/or issued notices to appear to over twenty underage drinkers identified by the undercover officers. One subject was taken to jail for resisting arrest and disorderly conduct. Many families and local stakeholders praised the officers for their attention to the area and response.

After the detail, FWC officers remained in King's Bay to work the fireworks display and vessel traffic. Multiple stops and safety violations were addressed. Lieutenant John Jones and Captain John Burton stopped a vessel with improper navigational lights. The operator showed multiple indicators of impairment and alcohol consumption. After failing field sobriety tasks, he was placed under arrest and transported to jail. At the jail he refused to submit to an approved breath test.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

On July 4th, Officer Bret Gill was targeting illegal spear fishing on the Ichetucknee River. Officer Gill received information from the day prior that individuals were spear fishing during the mid-day hours. Officer Gill hid his vehicle and entered the river a few hundred yards above where the suspects were fishing. After a short time, Officer Gill witnessed the suspects actively spear fishing. Lieutenant Kihei went to the location by land to assist. Officer Gill cited one suspect, gave the other a written warning, and both received written warnings for no divers down flags.

DIXIE COUNTY

Lieutenant Roy Williams observed a vehicle driving slowly down a woods road and illuminating wooded areas in a manner capable of disclosing deer. Upon stopping the subjects, Lieutenant Williams located a bolt action 17 caliber rifle and a spotlight. The subjects confessed that they were planning on killing a large deer they had seen earlier. Both were cited for attempting to take deer with a gun and light at night. The rifle and spotlight were seized as evidence.

DUVAL COUNTY

Officer Alan Hofmeister and Investigator Chip Butler responded to a complaint of an alligator hide hanging on a fence in front of a residence in Jacksonville. Upon arrival, the officers observed a four foot alligator hide hanging on a pump house in front of the residence. Contact was made with the resident who admitted that he had killed and skinned the alligator a week prior. The resident was issued a citation for possession of alligator parts and the hide was seized as evidence.

While patrolling on Heckscher Drive, Officer Sandy Blackburn inspected a vessel returning to Brown's Creek. Officer Blackburn asked a fisherman onboard the vessel if he had caught any fish. The occupant stated that he had caught a few. When Blackburn asked to see the fish, the fisherman took out a spotted sea trout and said, "It's still alive, I can put him back?" Blackburn asked the fisherman why he would want to put it back and the subject responded, "It's too little, isn't it?" Blackburn measured the fish and found that the spotted sea trout was undersize. The fisherman was cited for the violation and the spotted sea trout was returned to the water alive.

On July 4th, while working the fireworks detail off Jacksonville Beach, Officers O'Reilly and Stowell received a call about a swimmer in distress on the south side of the Jacksonville Beach pier. The officers located the swimmer who was struggling to keep his head above water. Officer O'Reilly threw the swimmer a type IV life ring and both officers pulled the young man into the patrol vessel. Once the subject was safely on board, the Officers contacted the Jacksonville Beach lifeguard station and coordinated the return of the young man to shore.

While on water patrol in the Inner Coastal Waterway, Reserve Officer Jim Pickard and Officer Blackburn made contact with a man fishing from a vessel who said he had fish on board. While opening the cooler the man said, "They were legal when I put them in here, but may have shrunk sitting on ice." Inspection of the cooler revealed five black drum, three of which were undersize. There was also a spotted sea trout which measured at the minimum legal requirements. The man said, "The fish was 16 inches before I put it on ice." He then insisted his ruler must be wrong. Appropriate citations and warnings were issued.

While on water patrol near the Little Jetties, Reserve Officer Jim Pickard and Officer Sandy Blackburn observed a vessel driving in an erratic manner, approaching them. The vessel's all around white light was not on and they stopped the vessel. Officer Blackburn noticed signs of impairment from the operator. The operator was brought to the nearest boat ramp where field sobriety tasks were conducted. After performing poorly on the tasks, the operator was arrested and taken to the Duval County Jail.

GILCHRIST COUNTY

On July 4th, Officer Todd Nichols stopped a subject operating a jet ski on the Suwannee River. During the inspection, signs of impairment were observed. Officer Nichols had the subject get into his patrol vessel, first placing a life jacket on him. Once in the vessel, the subject swayed and fell back into the river. Officer Nichols recovered the

subject and administered field sobriety tasks and as expected the suspect performed poorly. Officer Nichols arrested the subject and booked him into the Dixie County Jail. Due to the location of the incident, it was approximately three hours after the initial stop before a breath sample was obtained at which time the operator still blew a .180.

NASSAU COUNTY

Officer Tim Sweat observed a vehicle traveling west on State Road 200 that was unable to maintain a single lane. The vehicle crossed the white line several times and the yellow center lane approximately five times. The fifth time there was oncoming traffic was approaching. Officer Sweat conducted a traffic stop and found that the operator was not impaired; however, the operator's driver's license had been revoked as he was a habitual traffic offender. The subject was arrested and booked into the Nassau County jail.

While on water patrol, Officer Tom Tucker conducted a fisheries inspection of three people fishing from a vessel in Lansford Creek. The inspection revealed four undersize black drum on a stringer being towed behind the vessel. One of the subjects admitted that he knew the fish were black drum, but stated that he did not know the fish were undersize. The largest fish was twelve inches in the length. The minimum legal size for black drum is fourteen inches. Appropriate citations were issued.

Lieutenant Tony Wright was patrolling the shrimp docks on Amelia Island where he noticed a road side stand displaying a sign that said "shrimp for sale." Lieutenant Wright stopped to conduct a retail dealer inspection and found that the subject did not have a retail saltwater products license. The subject told Lieutenant Wright that he did not need a license because he was on the island and the City of Fernandina Beach did not require him to possess a retail dealer license. After further investigation, it was discovered that the subject also operated a seafood stand in Yulee that had all the proper licenses. Lieutenant Wright issued a citation for selling seafood without a retail license.

NORTHEAST REGION

PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Troy Starling responded to a complaint from the sheriff's department in reference to a houseboat that was moored on the St. Johns River near San Mateo. Upon completing an investigation, one person was cited for an MSD violation and a second person was booked into jail on an arrest warrant.

On July 4, Officers Mike Florence and Jesse Lee were on patrol of the St Johns River in the Palatka area during a fireworks display, when they observed a vessel operating without lights. During the stop the two officers detected signs of impairment from its operator. After field sobriety tasks were performed the Putnam County man was

arrested for boating under the influence and cited for no running lights. His breath alcohol level was .109.

Numerous trespass complaints have been received from the owners of two parcels of property in west Putnam County. Thursday through Saturday, Lieutenant Ben Allen, Officers Starling and Eric Meade issued six citations and five warnings for trespass between the two properties.

SOUTHWEST REGION

LEE COUNTY

Officers Adam Resnick and Justin Koble conducted panther patrol on Corkscrew Road. A total of eight citations were issued for speed violations, with a maximum speed of 81 miles-per-hour recorded in a marked 50 mile-per-hour zone.

Officers Jonathan Ruggiero and Lonnie Sushil were on land patrol in Fort Myers when they made contact with a fisherman who was carrying a cast net in a bag. Upon further inspection of the area where the subject had been fishing, the officers located a monofilament net across the opening of a culvert pipe in a canal. The subject had just started fishing for the day and admitted to the use of the net. A citation was issued for the use of an entanglement net.

OKEECHOBEE COUNTY COPS

Lieutenants Tim Riordan and Joe Allen and Officer Matt Ervin gave a presentation to the Okeechobee chapter of the Civil Air Patrol. Lieutenant Riordan presented the duties of the Division of Law Enforcement's Aviation Unit and Special Operations Group. Officer Ervin spoke about airboat law enforcement patrol. An FWC airplane and airboat were displayed during the presentation.

PASCO COUNTY

Officer Jacky Angelis observed several people snorkeling from a vessel in the Gulf near Cotee River with no dive flag displayed. After conducting a boating safety and fishery inspection on the vessel, Officer Angelis discovered the occupants were in possession of 69 live scallops, two pieces of live rock, and one sponge. The vessel operator was charged with harvesting scallops in a closed area and failure to display a dive flag. He was warned for the unlawful harvest of live rock and the sponge. The scallops and marine life were photographed and returned to the water alive.

On July 4, Officer Jacky Angelis responded to a boating accident off Anclote Island. The collision involved a personal watercraft (PWC) and an anchored vessel from "Boat US." The operator of the PWC was airlifted to Tampa General Hospital. Captain

Humberto Navarro and Officers Tom Graef and Wade Hattaway arrived on scene to assist with the investigation, which is being handled by the Investigations Section.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer Dieter Iten was provided information regarding several subjects at Fort Desoto Park catching redfish and hiding them in the mangroves. After Officer Iten searched the park and failed to locate the individuals, he contacted a witness and obtained a vehicle description and a tag number for the subjects. Officer Iten contacted Officer Wells for assistance. When Officer Wells approached the subjects' residence, they drove away. Officer Wells followed and eventually made contact with the subjects. Captain Young arrived on scene to assist and the officers determined the four subjects were in possession of nine redfish, seven of which were oversize. The subjects were also in possession of one oversize snook during closed season. The subjects were issued appropriate citations for possession of redfish over the bag limit, possession of oversize redfish and possession of snook during the closed season.

POLK COUNTY

Officers Adonious Duhart and Stephen Judah were on water patrol on the Winter Haven Chain of Lakes, near the Lake Summit boat ramp, when they observed a man fall from the bow of his boat while he was attempting to load the boat onto a trailer. The officers approached the subject to see if he needed any assistance. After determining the man was not injured from the fall, the officers began a boating safety inspection on the subject's vessel. While speaking with the subject, the officers noted several indicators suggesting that the man may be under the influence of alcohol. After conducting field sobriety tasks, Officer Judah placed the subject under arrest for boating under the influence and transported him to the Polk County Jail. The subject submitted two breath samples of 0.167 and 0.147. While interviewing the subject, Officer Judah learned the man had received several lacerations to his foot from the boat's propeller while he was attempting to push his vessel through one of the shallow canals. A boating accident report was also completed.

SARASOTA COUNTY

On July 4, Officer Adam Brown was patrolling Shackett Creek in Venice, in preparation for the city fireworks display, when he observed a vessel operating at excessive speed in a manatee zone. While conducting a boarding of the vessel, Officer Brown made several observations indicating that the vessel captain might be operating her vessel while impaired. Officer Brown asked the vessel captain to perform several field sobriety tasks, while onboard the vessel, which provided further indicators that she was impaired. The vessel and passengers were towed to shore and the vessel operator was given additional standardized field sobriety tasks. The operator was subsequently arrested for operating a vessel while impaired and transported to the Sarasota County Jail.

SOUTH REGION A

BROWARD COUNTY

In a remote area of the county, Reserve Officer Patrick Mc Donald observed a suspicious vehicle towing what appeared to be a stolen boat. After relaying the information to officers, Officer Darral Thomason and Nathan Brock stopped the vehicle on U.S. Highway 27. The investigation revealed that the vessel and trailer had been reported stolen from a Hialeah address. Other FWC officers as well as the Miami-Dade County Police Department Auto Theft Task Force units responded to the scene. The subjects were arrested and jailed for multiple grand theft crimes.

A case handled by the agency's Investigations section culminated with the relocation of a female deer to the Bush Wildlife Sanctuary in West Palm Beach. On June 24, investigators responded to a complaint about two deer being kept at a Southwest Ranches residence. Upon arrival, only one buck was observed on the premises. Investigators spoke to the new property owner who said the previous owner had been keeping the deer. The new owners had moved in to find the deer still on the property. They called Davie Police Department who in turn called FWC. While talking to the new owners, they said the doe had escaped from its pen. Broward FWC officers removed the buck and transported it to the sanctuary. On July 1, the owners called to report the doe had returned. Subsequently, it was also captured and relocated.

Officer Eric Alford and Lieutenant Dave Bingham stopped a vessel in Port Everglades inlet. Subjects possessed several species of undersize fish and were cited.

Lieutenant R. Laubenberger and Officer R. Stark were patrolling offshore of Hollywood Beach when they stopped a vessel with two people on board who were fishing. The vessel's owner exclaimed they had caught "a couple small ones" but opened the cooler only slightly to show the officers its contents. However, a large number of yellowtail snapper could also be seen inside. The subjects were found to be in possession of twenty-nine yellowtail snapper and one mangrove snapper. Of the twenty-nine yellowtails, twenty were undersize. The vessel owner was cited for the over-the-limit and size limit violations.

Lieutenant R. Laubenberger and Officer R. Stark responded to a vessel hit-and-run accident offshore of Hollywood. Two divers had been struck by a vessel that had fled the scene. Witnesses and victims stated that a vessel approached them, ran over their divers down flag, struck two of the three divers, and then fled the scene. The two victims were able to swim back to shore where they received medical attention. They were extremely fortunate to sustain only bruises and abrasions. Investigator L. Bruening and Officer T. Enos responded to the hospital and are investigating the case. To date, the offending vessel/operator has not been identified and it is hoped that anyone with information will come forward.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Investigator Jon Garzaniti conducted a "walk-through" of a local market reported to be selling undersize mutton snapper. He observed freshwater and saltwater fish products on display. Officers Rick Cobo and Jarrod Molnar assisted Investigator Garzaniti by conducting a regulatory inspection. Citations were issued for possession of undersize mutton snapper, no retail seafood dealer license, no freshwater fish dealer license, failure to maintain and/or produce invoices, and improperly labeling saltwater products.

Officer Amanda Phillips responded to a residence in Lake Worth to assist a sheriff's deputy with a subject who had shot and killed a hawk. Officer Phillips issued the subject a citation for the violation and evidence was seized. The sheriff's office is pursuing charges of reckless display of a firearm since shotgun pellets from the fired weapon had peppered a neighbor's house.

Investigator Jon Garzaniti completed an investigation involving a bad check that was written to the agency's Division of Finance and Budget. The check was for an agency issued permit. Investigator Garzaniti contacted representatives of the entity issuing the check. The investigative findings have been forwarded to the county's State Attorney Office for consideration of criminal charges.

SOUTH REGION B

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Dan Stermen and Lieutenant Wayne Maahs were engaged in a speed enforcement detail in the panther slow-speed zone of the two-lane U.S. Highway 41. The officers observed an eighteen-wheel tractor trailer traveling toward them at speeds over 80 miles-per-hour in the posted 45 mph zone. The rig swayed over the opposing lane and ran numerous cars off the road as it approached. The tractor trailer driver continued past their position, driving in a reckless manner. The officers stopped the rig. Upon exiting the cab, the driver immediately declared to the officers that he was "too drunk." Sobriety tasks confirmed the fact. A large, nearly empty bottle of vodka was observed on a bag of ice on the seat next to the driver. The driver was arrested and the rig was towed. He was charged with DUI, aggravated careless driving and two counts of battery on a law enforcement officer from an incident that occurred at the jail.

Officers Steve Wicker and Clinton Bean were conducting a speed enforcement detail in panther slow-speed zone number 3, on State Road 29, just north of I-75. A radar reading indicated a vehicle was traveling at 95 miles per hour. They also observed the car being driven erratically. After stopping the vehicle, the officers saw the vehicle's back-up lights illuminate. Knowing the driver was idling with the car in reverse, the officers ordered the driver to turn off the vehicle and place the keys on the roof. The officers observed that the driver was clearly impaired and virtually incoherent. They also saw dozens of prescription pills (Xanax) scattered about the interior. When asked if there were any weapons in the car, the driver stated he had a handgun under his seat. Officer Wicker ordered the driver out of the car, but he refused. The driver was again ordered out of the car, but instead bent down and reached under the seat where he had indicated a handgun was kept. Officer Wicker drew his sidearm and instructed the subject not to touch the handgun or pull it out from under the seat. After a few seconds, the driver complied with the officer's commands and exited the car. After securing the driver and passenger, the officers recovered a .40 caliber pistol from under the seat. Checks revealed that the driver had a lengthy criminal history including numerous felony convictions. The driver was transported to jail where he was examined by a drug recognition expert. He was charged with possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, possession of a controlled substance, DUI, and driving in excess of 50 mph over the posted speed limit.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Officer Mike Albert was patrolling Blue Lagoon, one of the county's slow/idle speed manatee zones. Officer Albert observed a personal watercraft (PWC) being operated at a fast speed while in the zone. The officer noticed suspicious vessel characteristics and conducted further inquiries. The subject could not provide any paperwork for the PWC and said his bill of sale was at home. The PWC was seized for investigation and taken to the Miami office. Officer Albert subsequently discovered that it had been stolen approximately six weeks earlier. The subject is under criminal investigation.

Officer Mike Albert and Lieutenant C. Rodriguez were on patrol when they observed two subjects fishing with treble hooks, commonly used to illegally snatch fish. When the officers made their approach, the subjects reacted by braking the treble hooks from their lines, throwing them into the water and walking away. The officers confronted the subjects and found them in possession of a peacock bass and tilapia. Both fish exhibited signs of having been snatched. The subjects were issued citations for the violation.

Officer S. Mayberg stopped a fishing vessel offshore. Seas were too rough to permit boarding. While idling in close proximity, Officer Mayberg requested that the subject show him his catch. The subject lifted up some non-regulated fish, proclaiming that was the only type fish he had caught. However, the officer could see that there were other types somewhat hidden in the cooler. Officer Mayberg escorted the vessel to shore to continue his inspection. The subject was found to be in possession of undersize red grouper, undersize yellowtail and four fillets (laws mandate that fish remain in whole condition while on the water). The subject was issued citations for the violations.

Officer Mike Albert observed a subject fishing with a treble hook, commonly used to illegally snatch fish, in Little River Canal. As the officer made his approach, the subject broke the treble hook from his line, discarded it and began to walk away. Officer Albert told the subject to stop and recovered the treble hook that had been thrown into the water. The subject was found to be in possession of a snatched bass and was cited for the violation.

Officer Dan Miranda was patrolling on an agency all-terrain-vehicle at Virginia Key when he observed several subjects entering a remote area of the mangrove lined shoreline. Officer Miranda maintained surveillance until the subjects returned to the parking lot. Previous to their return, one of the subjects had walked into the woods and retrieved a green bucket. Officer Miranda conducted an inspection and found thirteen spiny lobster in the bucket, six of them undersize. The subject holding the bucket was charged with possession of undersize and closed season spiny lobster.

Officers Mike Albert and Steve Persaud responded to a complaint of subjects spearfishing at Haulover Inlet jetty. They were suspected of spearing snook. The officers arrived in time to detain two subjects and conduct an investigation. They were found in possession of four speared, undersize, closed season snook. There were numerous violations associated with the subjects' actions. They both received several criminal and civil citations.

MONROE COUNTY

July 4th patrol activity for the entire South B Region (Collier, Miami-Dade, Monroe Counties) reflected the following statistics: 1,810 vessel inspections, 5,492 users checked, 113 uniform boating citations, 58 resource and other citations, 238 boating safety warnings, and 61 resource and other warnings issued, as well as two boating under the influence (BUI) arrests, 710 water patrol hours were performed and five hours of air patrol that included 736 boating safety hours,

82 calls for service, and three search-and-rescue missions. Officers responded to seven boating accidents.

The court awarded FWC a 28' Seafox vessel, two outboard motors and a vessel trailer after a final judgment of forfeiture was issued on a case investigated by the agency's Investigations section. The judgment resulted from a lengthy investigation involving vessel title fraud.

Officers Erik Steinmetz and Tiffany Davis responded to a subject threatening to commit suicide by swimming out to sea, oceanside of Whale Harbor. Toward dusk, the officers encountered the subject swimming offshore. The subject continued his attempts, forcing the officers to pull him from the water against his will. They transported him to shore where he received treatment for a laceration and further medical evaluation.

Investigators Roudebush and McDaniel conducted surveillance on several divers who possessed spear guns at the north end of Long Key Bridge. When the divers exited the water and saw the investigators, they ran to their vehicle and fled. Several houses south of the bridge, they stopped the vehicle. One man remained with the vehicle while the second subject fled on foot. He was caught and taken to jail. The subject remaining with the vehicle received a citation. Both were charged with possession of snook during closed season, undersize and speared snook, as well as spear fishing in the Upper Keys.

Officers Anders Bergstrom and Jill Izsak, and Lieutenant Roy Payne issued three subjects citations for interference with the duties of an officer, possession of undersize, closed season stone crab claws, and possession of closed season lobster. When the officers attempted to stop the suspect vessel, the subjects fled while dumping an orange colored fishing basket overboard. The officers marked the drop point, stopped the vessel, and returned to the scene to recover the illegal saltwater products.

Officers Raquel Daniels, Erik Steinmetz, and Robert Dube participated in Key Largo's Fourth of July parade, while towing an FWC patrol vessel. They distributed candy and received lots of response from a feisty crowd who, armed with water guns and fire hoses, soaked the FWC crew.

Officer Robert Dube hosted the Discovery Channel film crew who rode along during the Fourth of July weekend. Discovery Channel is filming the series "Green Planet" and is working with FWC to gather footage on environmental and resource issues. The film crew went on patrol with Officers Dube and Tiffany Davis on their first day of filming. On the second day, they rode with Officers Dube and Erik Steinmetz. The officers recovered a 200 pound loggerhead turtle that was in distress and delivered it to the Turtle Hospital staff. The turtle was named Liberty, in commemoration of the holiday weekend.