

FWC DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT FIELD OPERATIONS

**WEEKLY REPORT
September 11 – 17, 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

Officer Keith Clark checked an individual fishing at Fort Pickens on Pensacola Beach. A records check revealed the individual had a warrant for failure to appear. The subject was arrested and transported to the Escambia County Jail.

Lieutenants Dan Hahr and Brian Lambert were stopped on River Annex Road when they observed a vehicle sliding around the corner towards them. When it reached them, they spoke to the two juveniles inside. Small pieces of cannabis were scattered over the console in plain view. When asked, the juveniles admitted to smoking marijuana from a soda can earlier that day. The can was recovered and had cannabis residue on it. The subjects were issued notices to appear for possession of drug paraphernalia and a uniform traffic citation (UTC) for careless driving.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY COPS

Officers Fred Rondeau, Joe Murphy and Andy Berrey taught the laws portion of a hunter education class which was held at the 4-H center in Pensacola.

WALTON COUNTY

Officer Ken White was checking fishermen on the 331 Bridge in Walton County. When he approached two subjects, he noticed the lid to their cooler was open. Inside the cooler, he saw six spotted sea trout that appeared to be undersize. The fish were measured and five of them were less than 15 inches. The two subjects were issued the appropriate paperwork and the fish were returned to the water.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Lieutenant Mark Hollinhead, Investigator Eddie Gatlin and Officer Matt Webb assisted Officers Van Barrow and Danny Arnette serve a search warrant on a residence in Crestview after Officer Barrow obtained photos of an illegally killed deer. The antlers of the deer were located in the search along with the firearm used and additional photos of recently killed deer. The search warrant and the additional photos seized increased the number of suspects in the investigation. The investigation is ongoing.

GULF COUNTY

While working the scallop season on St. Joe Bay, Officers Hal Webb and Arnie McMillion conducted a marine fisheries inspection of a vessel with two occupants on board. After measuring the couple's scallops, they were found to be in possession of six gallons, which is two gallons over their daily bag limit. The husband took responsibility for the scallops that were over the legal limit and received a citation for the violation. The scallops were seized and returned back to the water alive.

While working on St. Joe Bay, Officers Arnie McMillion and Hal Webb conducted a marine fisheries inspection of a vessel with five occupants (three adults and two children) heading to a boat ramp. They asked the occupants of the vessel if they harvested any scallops and one of the occupants said they had a limit of ten gallons. Officer Webb then asked how they measured the scallops and they advised they just gauged them with their dive bags. The officers then measured the scallops and found the occupants to be in possession of 13½ gallons, which is 3½ gallons over their allowed daily bag limit. Two of the occupants took responsibility for the violation and were written citations. The scallops were seized and returned back to the water alive.

Officers Scott Hoffman and Hal Webb conducted a marine fisheries inspection on a vessel in St. Joe Bay with two occupants on board. The officers asked the occupants if they had any scallops on board and they advised that they had one trout and a “few” scallops. The officers asked to see the scallops and the occupants handed the officers two large bags. Officer Webb measured the scallops and found the occupants to be in possession of seven gallons of whole bay scallops, three gallons over their allowed daily bag limit. Both subjects were issued citations and three gallons of whole scallops were returned back to the water alive.

BAY COUNTY

While on water patrol, Officer David Erdman conducted a safety inspection of a vessel in Grand Lagoon. The operator of the vessel showed signs of impairment during the inspection. After field sobriety tasks were performed, the operator was taken into custody for operating a vessel while impaired.

Officers David Erdman and Neal Goss responded to a disturbance on Panama City Beach. The incident involved two parasail vessels that crossed too close to each other causing their tow lines to become entangled. Once on scene, the officers determined one vessel operator, after clearing his vessel of the other vessel's tow line, boarded the second vessel. He confronted the second vessel's captain, who subsequently suffered injuries from the fight that ensued. The vessel captain who boarded the second vessel was booked into the Bay County Jail for aggravated battery and grand theft.

Officers Neal Goss, David Erdman and Nick Price made several cases recently involving the scallop harvest closure in Bay County. All cases were made on the bay side of Shell Island and along Tyndall Air Force Base in St. Andrews Bay.

Officer Mike Nobles was on water patrol in St. Andrews Bay when he found a fisher who possessed two undersize gag grouper and two undersize speckled trout. Citations were issued.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

DUVAL COUNTY

Officers Jamey Stowell and Alex O'Britis were taking part in a night flight operation and were notified by the aircraft that there was a vehicle traveling in a closed area of Cecil Field. The officers stopped the vehicle and found that they had hunting dogs and a gun. The defendants admitted that they knew they were trespassing and that they were hunting hogs. Citations were issued.

Later in the same operation, Officers Stowell and O'Britis were directed to two vehicles inside Cary State Forest. The officers stopped both vehicles inside the forest behind a gate that had been dummy locked. The officers found the subjects to have live traps with them, one of the vehicles had a tag that was not assigned and the drivers of both vehicles did not have current licenses. Citations were issued for being in the forest after hours and for possession of live traps while in the forest. Citations were also issued for the tag not assigned.

NASSAU COUNTY

Officer Hope McGregor tracked five people to a make-shift campsite in the middle of Nassau Wildlife Management Area. Officer Adam Small and Nassau County Deputy Ken Clements arrived a short time later to assist. None of the five individuals had identification or permits that would allow them to be there. All five were arrested for illegal entry and because they could not be identified, were booked into the Nassau County Jail.

Officer Hope McGregor was patrolling the Nassau Wildlife Management Area where she found two vehicles with two occupants each. She stopped them and informed them that the area was not open for another week. None of the four individuals had permits to allow them in the management area. Citations were issued for the offense.

BRADFORD COUNTY

Lieutenants David Lee and Gary Knowles assisted Bradford County Sheriff's Office with a weapons and alligator investigation. A sheriff's office investigator informed Lieutenant Lee that a Bradford County man was in possession of a five-foot alligator at his residence. The subject was also allegedly in possession of a 30-30 rifle that he refused to return to the rightful owner. Upon arrival at the mobile home, Lieutenant Lee entered the residence, took possession of an 18" alligator that was being kept in the bathtub and cited the subject for illegal possession. The subject stated that the alligator had been given to him. The sheriff's office investigator simultaneously conducted his investigation into the weapons violation involving the 30-30 rifle. The 18" alligator was seized and subsequently released alive to the wild.

CITRUS COUNTY

FWC officers and Citrus County Sherriff's Office deputies worked the Annual Homosassa River Raft Race. Turnout was moderate and the weather was cloudy and rainy. It was estimated two to three hundred vessels participated. Several boating and safety equipment violations were addressed. No significant issues were reported.

The Citrus County Sherriff's Office called for assistance in locating a suicidal man in the Citrus Wildlife Management Area. The subject had last been seen walking into the management area and had threatened to take his life. Several officers from the area began responding to assist. Officer Doug Loyed arrived on scene and assisted a sheriff's officer with updated information on the missing subject. The unresponsive man was found in a wooded part of the management area. It appeared he had taken many unknown pills. Emergency medical personnel arrived and took the victim by ambulance to the hospital.

DIXIE & GILCHRIST COUNTIES

Officer Todd Nichols, Officer Justin Allen and Officer Travis Cooper worked an investigation regarding an illegal eight- point deer that had been killed. Officers located a large eight- point deer head that had been buried in a wooded area next to the shooters residence. Further investigation resulted in three suspects being charged with taking and possession of deer taken during the closed season. One trophy deer head and a 243 cal. rifle were seized for evidence.

NORTHEAST REGION

BREVARD COUNTY

Officer Chase Platt responded to a search and rescue call around 1 a.m. An airboat had capsized on Lake Winder and the three occupants were clinging to the vessel. Officer Platt responded by airboat and safely transported them to shore.

Officer Michael Slotin worked a crab detail in cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Officers Jane Whaley and Phillip Amoroso in the Banana River. During the detail, three commercial blue crab fishermen were checked and several violations were found. Officer Slotin issued one misdemeanor citation for no bio-degradable panel and a written warning for possession of another person's crab trap without permission. In addition to the state charges, two federal citations were issued for commercially crab fishing on federal waters without the proper federal permits. All total, 15 traps were found to be in violation of state laws with no bio-degradable panels and improperly marked buoys.

Officer David Wigley was dispatched to a complaint of a man selling lobster out of his vehicle at a gas station in Palm Bay. Once on scene, Officer Wigley conducted a resource inspection of the subject who had a sign advertising "lobster for sale" on his

truck. The inspection revealed that, while the man had all of the appropriate licenses to sell the lobster, nine of the lobster were undersize. A misdemeanor citation was issued for possession of undersize lobster. The subject did not want to say where he got the lobster. Officer Wigley explained all of the laws pertaining to the sale of saltwater products to the man so he could run a legal operation.

MARION COUNTY

Officer Kat Kelley was on water patrol on Lake Weir and observed an aluminum boat with a juvenile passenger wearing an improperly sized life jacket. Upon inspecting the vessel and addressing the life jacket violation, the vessel operator showed signs of being impaired. Officer Kelley took the subject back to shore and after field sobriety tasks, the subject was arrested for BUI. He refused to offer a breath sample and was booked into the county jail.

Officer Kelley was checking vessels at the Carney Island boat ramp on Lake Weir when a 21-foot ski boat approached the dock with three occupants. Officer Kelley began a boating safety inspection and immediately noticed that the operator was showing signs of impairment. After field sobriety tasks, the subject was arrested for BUI. The subject refused to offer a breath sample and was booked into the county jail.

Officers Joe Simpson and Steve Adam were on water patrol on Lake Kerr and observed two personal watercraft speed through the idle zone. When the officers attempted to stop them, the subjects went to a residence on the water and were followed by the officers. Officer Simpson observed signs of impairment in one of the subjects. He was asked to perform field sobriety tasks. After the tasks, the subject was arrested for BUI and booked into the county jail.

While checking a small vessel on Lake Weir, Officer Kelley noticed the operator was possibly impaired. She also observed several pill bottles in the vessel. After failing numerous field sobriety tasks, the operator was arrested for BUI and booked into the county jail.

OSCEOLA COUNTY

While on water patrol on West Lake Toho, Officer Kurt Arendas and Lieutenant Guy Carpenter II conducted a boating safety and fisheries inspection on a boat pulled up to a sand bar on Shingle Creek. During the inspection, the officers smelled the distinct odor of burnt cannabis. During a search, they found an Osceola County man had a bag of cannabis and a cannabis pipe inside his shoe. The subject was issued notices to appear for the violations.

PUTNAM COUNTY

Lieutenant Ben Allen conducted a presentation to the Pamona Park Neighborhood Watch organization. Topics discussed were living with alligators and the role of FWC. Approximately 30 residents were in attendance.

Captain Gregg Eason and Lieutenant Allen were on patrol in Interlachen Lakes Estates and were flagged down by a motorist who stated a suspect was dumping tires in a nearby wooded area. The motorist told the officers the suspect was driving a black Explorer with a utility trailer. Captain Eason and Lieutenant Allen located the suspect's tire tracks and followed them through the wooded area back to his residence. They found the Explorer parked behind the residence and the trailer was empty. The officers interviewed the suspect who admitted to dumping the tires and led the officers to an area where he dumped 25 tires. The suspect was cited for dumping in an amount less than 500 pounds.

Officer Troy Starling responded to a complaint in the Florahome area in which a complainant awoke that morning to find a dead black bear in his backyard. Officer Starling discovered the bear had been shot. He extensively processed the scene and was able to develop a suspect that lived nearby. The bear was taken to the Gainesville Lab and a necropsy showed the bear was shot on the right side, in front of the rear leg and the bullet was found in the left front shoulder. Officer Starling subsequently interviewed the suspect who admitted to shooting the bear. The bear was getting into his neighbor's trash and he walked 75 yards from his front door and shot the bear as it was running away. At the direction of the State Attorney's Office, the suspect was charged with taking/possession of a threatened species.

ST JOHNS COUNTY

Lieutenant Steve Zukowsky was on water patrol in the area of Matanzas Inlet Bridge. During a fisheries inspection, he found three redfish on board a 20-ft center console vessel occupied by six people— three adults and three juveniles. Two adults and the three juveniles had been fishing and all stated the fish had been harvested by the juveniles. The two adult males on the boat failed to carry their saltwater fishing licenses. Two oversize redfish were found in the fish hold, measuring 22", 27-1/8", and 29". The nine-year-old girl proudly stated she caught the 29-inch fish. Two of the oversize fish were released alive. The vessel captain/operator was issued a notice to appear for allowing the possession of oversize redfish on board his vessel. The captain and other adult male were issued written warnings for failing to carry their saltwater fishing licenses.

Officer Lee Lawshe was on water patrol in the area of Matanzas Inlet when he received information from an FWC Investigator regarding a local fisherman whom the investigator had seen harvesting large redfish from a vessel. Officer Lawshe made contact with the fisherman at the dock behind the subject's house and found an oversize redfish measuring 30 inches. The fisherman was issued a citation for possessing an oversize redfish. The fish was seized and donated to the St. Francis House homeless shelter in St. Augustine.

Officers Tim Matthews and Darryl Thornhill inspected four fishermen – two adult males and two adult females – who had been fishing at Matanzas Inlet. The officers, working off a tip from a wildlife alert caller, caught up with the boat just as the party was departing the unimproved boat ramp at Granny’s Hole in Summer Haven Creek. During the inspection, the officers found four redfish in one cooler and four in another. Four of the eight redfish were oversize. During a post-Miranda interview, each man and woman admitted to harvesting two redfish. Notices to appear were issued to the four Putnam County residents for possession of over the daily bag limit of redfish, and oversize redfish. The captain/operator of the vessel was issued a citation for allowing the possession of oversize redfish and over the daily bag limit of redfish on board his vessel. The fish were seized and donated to the St. Francis House homeless shelter.

Sheriff’s deputies responded to a complaint of a suspicious vehicle and found a suspect with a freshly killed deer. Lieutenant Jamie Bevans and Officer Jamie Stowall responded to take over the investigation. Officers Rich Wilcox and Lee Lawshe responded to assist. During the investigation the officers learned the suspect had a tree stand with corn and killed the deer with a bow. The subject was charged with taking deer during the closed season. His bow was seized as evidence and the deer was donated to a charitable organization.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer Don Meurlot received information and photos of a twelve point buck deer (in velvet) that had possibly been shot and killed out of season in Volusia County. Further investigation resulted in names and addresses of those possibly involved. An adult female, who may have been involved, was interviewed by Officers Jeff Gier and Pat Conn. She provided additional information concerning the adult male who had killed the deer. The man was located at a residence later the same evening and was interviewed by Officers Meurlot and Gier. He admitted to killing the deer in July by bow and arrow and voluntarily provided the deer’s antlers and the remaining frozen meat which were taken as evidence. All criminal charges have been submitted by Officer Meurlot to the States Attorney’s Office.

SOUTHWEST REGION

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Officers Ken Thompson and Jacob Ahlers conducted a vehicle stop for inoperative trailer lights. After the vehicle was stopped, the driver fled on foot and was not apprehended. The passenger was interviewed and provided the officers with the driver’s identity. During a search of the vehicle, 153.7 grams of marijuana were discovered along with drug paraphernalia. Felony drug and habitual traffic offender charges were filed, as well as two misdemeanor charges for resisting arrest without violence and possession of drug paraphernalia.

LEE COUNTY

Officers Justin Koble, Jason Cooke, and Demian McColgin were conducting fishery inspections in the Charlotte Harbor Preserve, in Cape Coral. The officers observed two known wildlife violators catching and keeping undersize snook and redfish and attempted to approach them as they began to exit the preserve. After the individuals began walking in separate directions, Officer Koble approached one individual, while Officer Cooke approached the other. Officer Cooke was able to successfully place one individual under arrest. When Officer Koble approached the other individual and informed him that he was under arrest, the individual struck Officer Koble and fled into the mangroves. A search ensued with the help of Captain Denis Grealish, Lieutenants Darrin Riley and Jeff Rebon, Investigator Greg Stanley, and Officers Al Simontis, Craig Mitchell, Ronald Perry, Sam Cohl, Barry Shaw and Lonnie Sushil. Cape Coral Police Department and Lee County Sheriff's Office provided additional units, including K-9 and aviation. The individual was not located, but is well known to the officers and a warrant for his arrest has been issued. Officer Koble did not sustain any reportable injuries.

Officer Jay Ewing was in the area of Charlotte Harbor Buffer Preserve when he observed two Fort Myers Police Department officers with an unconscious individual. Officer Ewing assisted and administered CPR on the victim for approximately 20 minutes until emergency medical service (EMS) arrived on scene. As he was helping EMS load the individual into the ambulance, Officer Ewing, who was exhausted, passed out from heat exhaustion. Officer Ewing was transported to Lee Memorial Hospital and treated for dehydration. He is expected to fully recover and return to work soon.

Investigator Larry Jernstedt received information from the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) in Fort Myers Beach about four individuals on a vessel with forty 15-gallon containers of gasoline onboard. The USCG, U.S. Customs and U.S. Immigration requested assistance from FWC. Investigator Jernstedt, Officers Justin Koble and Brian Cazalot, and Lieutenant Darrin Riley assisted with the apprehension. After the individuals were taken to USCG Station in Fort Myers and questioned by Customs and Immigration, they were arrested by Investigations Larry Jernstedt and Lar Gregory for carriage of gasoline on a vessel. One individual also had an arrest warrant from Miami for kidnapping. A 2008, 28-foot Sea Fox vessel and approximately 600 gallons of gasoline were seized.

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Officer Dirk Williamson observed two subjects hunting alligators in Pool A of the Kissimmee River. During an inspection, Officer Williamson located an untagged alligator in the subjects' boat. Both individuals received notices to appear in court for failing to tag an alligator as required by law.

PASCO COUNTY

Lieutenant Pamela Hoback responded to a complaint of a subject possessing a Burmese Python without a permit. The owner had an eight-foot albino Burmese python in a cage measuring 16" X 36" X 12" with a crude latch securing it. Lieutenant Hoback charged the owner with possession of reptile of concern without a permit. The owner was also issued written warnings for failure to microchip the snake, failure to have a critical incident plan and improper caging requirements.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer Andy Polaszek and Lieutenant Edward Prouty were on water patrol at Johns Pass when they assisted the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office with a subject who fled from a traffic stop and jumped into the water. Pinellas County deputies boarded the FWC vessel with Officer Polaszek and Lieutenant Prouty and attempted to talk the subject into giving up, but were unsuccessful. After the subject swam and treaded water for approximately one hour, the deputies utilized a CO2 gas gun that fires plastic balls containing pepper spray. After the subject was hit numerous times, he quickly surrendered and was apprehended. The subject was charged with driving on a suspended license and resisting arrest without violence.

SOUTH REGION A

BROWARD COUNTY

Officer Mike Naujoks stopped a commercial swordfish vessel as it returned to port. An inspection revealed five swordfish lying on the deck without ice and one undersize swordfish in a cooler. Also, buoy gear was improperly marked and the required saltwater products license and federal fishing permit were not on board. Officer Naujoks issued several state and federal citations. The case will be turned over to National Marine Fisheries Service for prosecution.

Officers Dave Weis and Joshua Varnadoe were called by Investigator Carcasses to check three subjects fishing in Stormwater Treatment Area 2. The three subjects had bicycled and trespassed onto the property. All three were cited for over-the-limit and oversize black bass violations.

On Saturday at 10:30 p.m., Officer Enos and Lieutenant Laubenberger responded to a City of Hollywood address in reference to a large snake in the driveway. The officers met with the complainant who would not leave his porch. After searching the immediate area, Officer Enos obtained permission to check the complainant's car. He opened the vehicle's hood and saw the snake curled up on top of the battery. The snake was caught and identified as a four foot long Ball Python. The snake's owner, if any, could not be located so the snake was taken to a permitted facility.

On Monday at approximately 1:00 a.m., Officer Harp and Lieutenant Laubenberger responded to Fort Lauderdale's U.S. Coast Guard Station. Two subjects were on board

their thirty-six foot vessel when they struck an unidentified object while cruising in offshore waters. They inspected their engine compartment and found that the vessel was quickly flooding. They hurriedly gathered personal belongings, including a portable marine radio, and escaped into their small inflatable boat. The vessel sunk, leaving only a small portion of its bow exposed above the water. The U.S. Coast Guard arrived and pulled the subjects from the water.

GLADES COUNTY

Lieutenant Brown was on patrol when he observed a vessel with six subjects on board pass by his location. The subjects were holding shotguns as they proceeded toward Old Sportsman Boat Ramp. Lieutenant Brown conducted a resource and boating safety inspection and found the subjects in possession of thirty moorhens with no species identification (no head or wing attached) visible. Four of the subjects admitted to taking the birds and dismembering them in the field. Those four subjects received citations for the violation.

HENDRY COUNTY

Officer Henry Rockwell was on patrol in Labelle when he observed a subject using a cast net to catch fish and place them in a clear container. Officer Rockwell approached and conducted a fisheries inspection. The subject advised that he had "...caught a few fish for lunch" and that the fish he had caught, a black bass and seven panfish, were illegal to catch with a cast net. The subject was cited for the violation.

Lieutenants Pam Steelman, Eddie Brown and Investigator Armstrong responded to two separate but simultaneous incidents of lost hunters. One subject was lost in the Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest and Wildlife Management Area (OK Slough) and the other subject was lost in Dinner Island Ranch Wildlife Management Area. The subject in OK Slough was located about one and one-half hour after the officers received the call. The victim got lost after becoming disoriented. The other subject in Dinner Island was located five hours after the call for assistance was received. He had gotten lost, but kept on walking.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Weis and Varnadoe encountered three subjects in South Florida Water Management District's Stormwater Treatment Area 2, which is currently closed to public use. The subjects were found in possession of thirty-two black bass, seventeen over the allowed amount. Of those thirty-two bass, nine were oversize. Officer Varnadoe issued citations to all subjects for no freshwater fishing licenses and the oversize/over-the-allowed-amount violations.

Officer Ben Hankinson encountered a subject illegally using a cast net to catch gamefish at Pahokee Marina. The subject was in possession of twenty-two blue gills and fourteen black crappie. He was cited for the violation.

Officer Maynard was patrolling near County Road 827 when he observed five subjects fishing on private U.S. Sugar Property. Lieutenant Steelman arrived to assist. All subjects received citations for trespassing. Three of them were additionally cited for not having a fishing license.

Officers Amanda Phillips and David Fowler assisted the U.S. Coast Guard with the recovery of a body in the Intracoastal Waterway near the Southern Boulevard Bridge. A fisherman was reported to have disappeared from that location the previous night.

Officer Jeff Haynes was patrolling the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area when he encountered two subjects illegally picking palmetto berries. Both subjects were illegal aliens and one of them fled into the woods and escaped. Federal agents arrived and took the remaining subject into custody to start deportation proceedings. Lieutenant Russo assisted Officer Haynes with the incident.

Officer Amanda Phillips, Lieutenant Annie Plastic, and a FWC intern were on water patrol near Palm Beach Inlet. Officer Phillips stopped and inspected four subjects fishing by the south jetty. The vessel's owner was found to be in possession of two oversized snook. Citations were issued for the oversized and over-limit violations.

COP

Officer Stone and Lieutenant Laubenberger attended Boca Raton's 9/11 memorial service at Mizner Park Amphitheater. The event was sponsored by the Palm Beach County Fire Rescue Chiefs' Association and was attended by approximately 2,000 people. One guest speaker was David Paulison, FEMA's director during the 9/11 tragedy.

SOUTH REGION B

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Marc Shea inspected a vessel several miles off shore from Naples. The operator was towing a twenty-four foot sailing vessel and the officer's investigation revealed that the operator intended to sink the vessel for use as an "artificial reef". The operator was cited for transporting illegal artificial reef material on state waters.

Officers Doyle Cook and Marc Shea conducted surveillance on several subjects fishing with an illegal net gear at Tigertail Beach. The officers observed the subjects wading in systematic patterns along the shoreline. When the officers made their approach, both subjects dropped their illegal net gear and started casting legal cast nets. Officers located the difficult to detect, cleverly designed monofilament gill net that was secured to poles beneath the water's surface. The subjects were arrested for multiple felony level netting violations.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Officers Mike Albert and Erik Sullivan received a tip from a concerned citizen about several subjects catching and keeping undersize snook at Cape Florida State Park. Both officers searched the park and found some fishermen who matched the provided description of the subjects. The officers maintained surveillance of them while waiting for the park rangers to advise patrons of the nightly closure time. Once the park was closed, the subjects walked directly to their vehicle and began loading gear into it. The officers confronted the subjects, conducted a fisheries inspection, and found them to be in possession of two undersize snook. Officer Shalom Mayberg arrived on scene to assist while one subject was cited for the undersize fish violations.

Officer Mike Albert was conducting late-night fisheries inspections on vessels returning to Crandon Park boat ramp. He observed and confronted four subjects who seemed to be in a hurry to leave the ramp. When the subjects were asked if they had caught any fish, they answered, "The fishing was bad- not much out there." They were asked again if they had caught any fish. The vessel owner answered, "We only have a few grunts." A fisheries inspection revealed undersize red grouper, gray snapper and yellowtail snapper. The vessel owner was cited for multiple size limit violations.

MONROE COUNTY

Officers and investigators responded to a trap molestation complaint oceanside of Harry Harris Park, which resulted in the arrest of subjects for felony trap molestation and theft. Commercial fishermen observed the actions of two subjects on board a twelve foot skiff, recorded the illegal activity on video, and then contacted FWC.

In a second trap molestation incident, officers and investigators arrested several commercial fishermen for felony trap molestation and theft near Long Key Bridge.