

FWC DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT FIELD OPERATIONS

**WEEKLY REPORT
November 6 - 12, 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

Officers Fred Rondeau, Keith Clark, Randy Webb and Andy Berrey worked a fisheries detail in Pensacola Bay. Several citations were issued, including two separate violations for possession of red snapper during a closed season, possession of oversize red drum, and harvesting blue crabs by an illegal method. Several other related warnings were also issued.

Lieutenants Brian Lambert and Dan Hahr responded to a complaint that a deer had been taken by an illegal method in Molino. After interviewing several subjects, two citations were issued for possession of a deer taken by an illegal method. Two notice to appear citations were also issued for possessing less than 20 grams of cannabis and drug paraphernalia discovered during the investigation.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers assigned to Okaloosa and Walton counties, together with FWC Aviation, worked a special detail targeting illegal night hunting. At approximately 12:30 am, Officer Van Barrow and Pilot Dave Calianno spotted a subject working a light north of Laurel Hill. Officer Barrow directed Officer Danny Arnette to the subject. Officer Arnette made contact with the subject and found him to be in possession of a shotgun and a .22 caliber rifle. The subject stated he was depredation hunting. Officer Arnette's follow-up investigation revealed that the subject was depredation hunting on fields without crops, the subject did not call in to activate the permit, and he did not have a hunting license. Officer Arnette is working with the Okaloosa County State Attorney's Office on charges of all three violations.

As Tropical Storm Ida moved north into the Gulf of Mexico causing extremely rough conditions, Officer Matt Webb responded to a vessel in distress in the Gulf, approximately five miles southeast of the Destin Pass. Officer Webb assisted the Coast Guard with rescue of the three subjects from the 30-foot sport fisherman and transported them to the Coast Guard Station at Destin. The vessel was left at anchor and ended up on the beach in Navarre due to the high seas from Tropical Storm Ida.

WALTON COUNTY

Walton County Sheriff's Office notified FWC Dispatch that one of their deputies had stopped a vehicle and found the subject in possession of a spotted fawn. Officers Danny Arnette and Van Barrow responded to the deputy's location and interviewed the subject who admitted to shooting the fawn on Highway 2. The subject was charged with possession of a spotted fawn and killing a deer at night with a gun and light.

BAY COUNTY

Officer Joe Chambers checked a subject in East Bay whose fishing license was expired for over a year. He also located 14 whole stone crabs and five undersize claws during the inspection of the subject's boat. Citations were issued.

Officer Joe Chambers was checking the Tyndall Bridge area for fishers when a vehicle pulled up and a subject started fishing. When the subject was checked later, he was found to have a suspended driver license and was a habitual traffic offender. A citation was issued.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Officers Woody Cook, Jason Carroll, John Allen, Travis Huckeba, and Captain Donald Duval conducted an illegal net fishing detail. Two vessels were boarded and inspected in the area of Postum Bayou. The vessels were occupied by four commercial fishermen. During the first vessel inspection, one of the two commercial fishermen was charged for violations pertaining to not having a restricted species endorsement and not having their nets properly marked with their saltwater products license number. During the second vessel inspection, the two commercial fishermen were arrested and charged with violations pertaining to nets not properly marked, too many meshes per foot, possession of entangling nets, use of entangling nets, use of nets over 500 square feet, fishing more than two nets at a time, possession of over 50 mullet and an entangling net, possession of spotted sea trout and an entangling net, flagrant net violation (felony), and fishing with a suspended saltwater products license (third offense, felony). Four nets were seized along with 747 pounds of black mullet and three spotted sea trout.

GADSDEN COUNTY

Officers Billy Kemp, Matt Bell, Reserve Officer Donald Trussell and Lieutenant Harry Parker responded to a call for help from an individual who was lost on the Wacissa River, south of Goose Pasture. The subject stated he had a 2-year-old boy and another companion in a small boat and was unable to find his way back to the landing. Pilots Frank Utermohlen and Dave Calianno responded and located the subjects with a helicopter and search light. After spotting the subjects, they directed Officers Kemp and Bell to the location. The officers led them out of the swamp and back to the landing.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

ALACHUA COUNTY

On November 6, after receiving several complaints of road hunting and shooting deer in the Orange Creek Small Game Area (closed to deer hunting), Officers Brad Stanley and Joseph Johnston began working a deer decoy operation in southeast Alachua County. After several hours, a total of six misdemeanor citations were issued and three infractions. The misdemeanor arrest included two for shooting off the right-of-way, two for attempting to take deer in a closed area, one for driving while license suspended with knowledge, and one arrest for a warrant out of Alachua County. The individual was transported to Alachua County Jail. The infractions were for hunting license violations.

BAKER COUNTY

On November 1, Officer Donald Bailey discovered an unsupervised 15-year-old hunting with a muzzleloader on private land. Officer Bailey located the father and charged him with failure to supervise a minor.

BRADFORD COUNTY

On November 8, Officer Ricky Justus noticed a vehicle parked at Santa Fe Swamp Wildlife Management Area. Officer Justus viewed inside the vehicle and observed a muzzleloader gun along with camouflage attire. Knowing that hunting season was not actively occurring in Santa Fe Swamp Wildlife Management Area, Officer Justus set-up surveillance and waited for the occupants to return. Two subjects, dressed in camouflage clothing, carrying tree climbers and armed with muzzleloader guns, returned to the vehicle. Both subjects admitted to hunting the area. Officer Justus charged the two subjects with hunting on a closed wildlife management area.

CITRUS COUNTY

On November 5, Officer Terry Allyn received a call from the Citrus County Sheriff's Office reference to several subjects that had shot a deer illegally in the east Citrus Springs area. The vehicle description was provided and Citrus deputies located the vehicle in a residential area two miles away. Officer Allyn arrived at the residence along with several deputies. They found two doe deer in the backyard. One of the subjects at the scene was cooperative; however the other was hiding in an abandoned trailer next door. The subject decided to flee the area on foot through a wooded area across the street. Sheriff deputies used their helicopter and called for a K-9 Unit. Soon after the dog arrived, the subject was located hiding under a pile of leaves. Both subjects were charged with possession of deer during the closed season. The fleeing subject was charged with resisting arrest and also had a warrant for his arrest. The deer were donated and a 30-30 rifle was seized.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

On November 6, Officer Leslie Sharp was contacted and advised of a doe deer that had been shot from a county road in northern Columbia County. The landowner and his son were hunting on their property when they heard a shot come from the vicinity of the county road. The son made his way there to see a small truck leaving the area. A short time later, the same truck was seen again on the dirt grade and the landowner got the tag number. The landowner found a dead doe deer near his fence that had been covered up with pine straw and a subject crouched down across the road from the deer. Officer Sharp was able to locate the individuals involved and cited them for the violation.

On November 8, Officer Todd Hoyle was surveilling concrete culvert pipes along Interstate 10. He had information from earlier in the year that subjects were trespass hunting on the Columbia County landfill property during the last hunting season. After four hours, Officer Hoyle witnessed four subjects with rifles and a shotgun travel on foot across private property, go into the culvert pipe, exit along the north side of I-10, and cross the Department of Transportation's fence onto the landfill property. Officer Hoyle summoned Officer Leslie Sharp to assist him. Sometime later, one subject returned and Officer Sharp apprehended him on the south side of I-10. The rest of the individuals entered the culvert, and Officers Hoyle and Sharp trapped them inside from both ends. The remaining three were apprehended without incident and interviewed. While inside the county property, two of them had shot at a doe deer. They were charged with two counts of felony trespass, attempting to take deer by illegal method, and display of firearms on the right-of-way of a state or federal road. Two suspects were cited for no hunting license and no muzzleloading stamp. A Mossberg .22 rifle, a Marlin .22 magnum rifle, a New England .22 Hornet rifle, a Mossberg .12 gauge shotgun, a flashlight, and the

accompanying rounds were seized as evidence. All four subjects were transported to the Columbia County Jail.

DUVAL COUNTY

On October 31, Officer Chris Holleman was in route to his vessel for water patrol. Upon arrival at the marina, he spoke to an individual he believed to be impaired based on their demeanor. A minute later he saw the individual driving a vehicle. He conducted a traffic stop and field sobriety tests and found the individual to be impaired. Officer Holleman arrested the subject and booked him in the Duval County jail. The individual submitted to a breathalyzer test and registered more than two times the legal limit.

LEVY COUNTY

On November 4, the Levy County Sheriff's Office requested assistance in locating a hunt camp where they had information a homicide had just occurred. As FWC officer's responded to the camp, they received information that the homicide suspect had also taken a hostage and was holding him at gun point in the woods at a local mud hole. The Levy County Sheriff requested that FWC's Special Operations Group (SOG) respond to secure the perimeter and to provide surveillance/security for the negotiations. The suspect openly admitted to killing his wife and claimed that he was going to kill the hostage and himself if his demands were not met. The FWC SOG members paired up with Levy County deputies and were able to successfully get in close proximity to the suspect to provide the needed coverage for the negotiations. After an extended amount of time, the suspect let the hostage go and surrendered himself to the authorities.

On November 3, Officer Dorvan Daniel was working illegal night hunting activity when he observed a truck traveling slowly down the road while shining a flashlight out into the woods. Officer Daniel stopped the vehicle and located a loaded rifle in the cab of the truck. The occupants admitted that they were hunting but claimed that they were only looking for hogs. Officer Daniel issued the driver a citation for the gun and light violation.

On November 6, Officer Sam Dishman was targeting illegal night hunting when he located a truck stopped in the road bordering the Goethe State Forest with the passenger door open. As he continued to monitor the vehicle, a female came walking down the side of the road towards him yelling at the driver of the truck. The truck was driving backwards down the road with the door open following the female. Officer Dishman stopped the vehicle and made contact with the male driver. The couple had got in an argument and the female had exited the vehicle several times while on the way home. Officer Dishman ordered the driver to stand at the rear of the vehicle while he spoke to the female. The male quickly responded back to the cab of the truck and started to reach in the center console. Officer Dishman gave several loud commands for the man to get out of the vehicle and show his hands. The man continued to refuse. Officer Dishman was able to remove the man from the vehicle and placed him under arrest. Officer Dishman prepared the vehicle for impound and completed an inventory of the vehicles contents. During the inventory, Officer Dishman located a bag of marijuana and several smoking devices near the center console area. The man was booked on drug charges and resisting arrest.

SUWANNEE COUNTY

On November 6, Investigator Jason McMillan received information in reference to possible poaching that was occurring on a parcel of land near Live Oak. Inv. McMillan responded to the

area and located an unoccupied vehicle parked on the land. After a short period of time, two subjects dressed in camouflage, carrying a 270 rifle, walked out of the woods towards the vehicle. Inv. McMillan stopped the subjects and questioned them as to why they were hunting during muzzleloading season with a modern firearm. After locating evidence of a freshly killed deer, additional questioning revealed the subjects had killed a doe deer on the property the day before. The subjects were cited for taking deer out of season and taking deer by unlawful method.

TAYLOR COUNTY

On November 5, Officer Chad Albritton was checking fishermen at Peterson's Landing on the Fenholloway River from a concealed location. During that time, Officer Albritton observed a vessel containing two occupants approach the boat ramp. One passenger exited the vessel and began carrying a wet, white tee shirt with the sleeves tied in knots to a parked vehicle. Officer Albritton identified himself and inquired about the contents of the tee shirt. Upon inspection, he found seven undersize redfish, five undersize black drum and one undersize spotted sea trout. During post Miranda, the suspect stated he'd caught all fish contained in the tee shirt and that he knew they were all too short. The operator of the vessel possessed one 18-inch redfish and one 15-inch spotted sea trout inside the live well of his vessel as well. The subjects were cited for the violations.

NORTHEAST REGION

BREVARD COUNTY

On November 5, Officers Justin Morgan and Patrick Corley were on land patrol on the north side of Sebastian Inlet and observed a man leaving the catwalk headed towards his vehicle. The officers stopped the man and asked if he had caught anything. The man stated he had not caught any fish. However, the officers noticed a cooler in the bed of the man's truck and asked to check the cooler. The man gave them permission and inside the cooler was a snook that appeared to be under size. A measurement of the fish revealed it to be 27 ½ inches, which was ½ of an inch shorter than the minimum size of 28 inches. The man instantly became defensive and stated the men on the catwalk said it looked legal. The man in violation did not have a measuring device and was estimating the length of the fish. He was issued a misdemeanor citation and the snook was seized and photographed.

On November 8, Officer Michael Slotin was on patrol in Banana River and observed a pontoon boat exceeding the manatee zone adjacent to the Kelly Park boat ramp. Officer Slotin made contact with the operator to conduct a safety inspection and detected the distinct odor of alcoholic beverage coming from the operator. Field sobriety tasks were administered and based on the results, the man was transported to the sheriff's department East Precinct where a breath test was conducted. His breath test results were .155 and .156 breath alcohol level. He was then transported and booked into the county jail for boating under the influence (BUI) and issued a warning for violation of the manatee slow speed zone.

On November 8, Officer Corey Bridwell was fueling his vessel at Titusville Marina on the Indian River and watched a man and woman leave the marina and speed through the manatee zone on the west shore of the river. Officer Bridwell stopped the vessel and instructed the man to motor his vessel back into the marina to get out of the high winds on the water. Once in the

marina basin, Officer Bridwell conducted a safety inspection on the vessel. During the inspection, Officer Bridwell noticed the man's pupils were extremely constricted and asked if he had been drinking. The man initially said he had three drinks, but during the conversation changed his number of drinks to five. Officer Bridwell conducted field sobriety tasks, during which the man displayed several clues of impairment. After he was arrested for BUI, the man refused to take a breath test. He was transported to the county jail where he was booked for BUI and issued a citation for violating the manatee slow speed zone.

On November 9, Officer Kris Culver was on land patrol on the north side of Sebastian Inlet and saw an individual run by him and place an oversized snook into his vehicle. The individual was issued a citation for possession of oversized snook.

BREVARD COUNTY COPS

On November 12, the crew of the *CT Randall* vessel was recognized at the Coastal Conservation Association's Space Coast Chapter annual banquet in Melbourne. They were presented with the Space Coast Chapter's Officer of the Year award. Lt. Jeff Sidor, Officers Jeff Luce and Ryan Smith were present to receive the prestigious award.

LAKE COUNTY

On the afternoon of November 6, Officer Tom Kist was working muzzleloader season in the Hilochee Wildlife Management Area when he checked a hunter with a cooler containing deer meat. The hunter claimed he had killed a nine-point deer in the morning. When asked where the deer's head was located, the hunter paused and said it is at his father's house. The hunter was issued a citation for possession of untagged deer meat and possession of deer without positive sex identification.

PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Lee Lawshe responded to a complaint in which a citizen stated he found an injured Red Tail Hawk, which had been shot by his neighbor. Officer Lawshe took the hawk to Interlachen Vet Clinic who then sent it to a rehabilitator in Gainesville. Officer Lawshe interviewed the suspect who admitted to shooting the hawk with a pellet rifle. He was charged with taking a Red Tailed Hawk.

Lt. Ben Allen checked a fisherman at Orange Creek and Hwy 315 who stated he had caught four or five bream. However, a check of the fisherman's bucket revealed he had also caught eight black bass, seven of which were undersize. He was cited for taking over the bag limit of black bass and possession of undersize black bass.

Lt. Allen and Officer Troy Starling responded to a complaint at Caravelle Check Station. Two hunters heard a third hunter shoot. Shortly after, they saw a wounded deer run across the road. The hunters showed the shooter where the deer crossed. They said moments later the shooter came out and said he must have missed. The two hunters went into the area and found a four point buck that had been shot. The officers went to the shooter's residence, and he admitted to shooting the deer. He was charged with taking deer with less than three points on one side.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Officer Lawshe was on foot patrol on property adjacent to a hunt club. He found a marijuana plant that had recently been picked and ATV tracks leading to a residence. Officer Lawshe interviewed the home owner who admitted the plant was his, and he had given the buds he picked to his daughter. Officer Lawshe charged the man with possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis. He then went to the daughter's house and seized a baggie of marijuana that had been given to her by her father. She was also charged with possession less than 20 grams of cannabis.

SOUTHWEST REGION

HARDEE COUNTY

FWC investigators and Florida Alcohol, Beverage, and Tobacco agents worked a joint detail targeting moonshine that was discovered during a traffic stop by FWC officers. The arrest that resulted from this detail received a favorable court disposition after the subject pled no contest. He was found guilty of possession of moonshine and received a \$400.00 fine.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Officer Kristen Gavagni received information regarding a subject who was trespassing and fishing with a cast net from a South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) structure on the Slough Ditch Canal. When Officer Gavagni approached the individual, he appeared to discard fish from a bucket. The fish were not recovered, but the individual was charged with trespassing on a SFWMD structure.

Officer Gavagni observed an adult and several juveniles fishing from a railroad trestle crossing the Istokpoga Canal near U.S. Highway 98. There are several "No Trespassing" signs posted in the area. The adult received a citation for trespassing on the railroad trestle because of the danger posed to the subjects

LEE COUNTY

Officer Adam Resnick conducted panther patrol on Corkscrew Road and issued eight citations for speeding. The highest recorded speed was 76 miles-per-hour in a posted 45 mile-per-hour zone.

Officers Jay Ewing and Justin Koble conducted panther patrol on Corkscrew Road and issued six citations for speeding. The highest recorded speed was 73 miles-per-hour in a posted 45 mile-per-hour zone.

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Officer Dirk Williamson received information that a club, with numerous members owning racing boats, would be operating their vessels on the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and the Kissimmee River. Previously there were a number of incidences of reckless operation and one fatality attributed to the high speed vessel operation. A detail involving Polk and Osceola County Sheriff's Offices and ten FWC members, including the utilization of the FWC airplane, was organized by Officer Williamson. The detail was conducted on Saturday, November 7, and as a

result of concentrated high-visibility patrols, no accidents were reported and no citations were issued for careless or reckless operation.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Lieutenant Grant Burton was on Gandy Boulevard when he noticed a large school of mullet just off the beach. Lieutenant Burton also observed a truck towing a commercial fishing vessel driving in the opposite direction, watching the same school of mullet. After several minutes, Lieutenant Burton observed an individual deploy a large net using a commercial fishing boat. Several other subjects began to work the net to shore to harvest the mullet. After the individuals were confronted by Lieutenant Burton, it was determined that the one net was actually three nets connected together, totaling 1,242 square feet. The fish were released alive and the net was seized as evidence. The subject who deployed the net was charged with possession of a net more than 500 square feet, on a vessel less than 22 feet, fishing with nets connected, fishing with more than 500 square feet of seine net and failure to transit through an approved corridor.

SOUTH REGION A

BROWARD COUNTY

Officers organized an enforcement detail in three of the wildlife management areas in western Broward and Palm Beach counties. The intent was to enforce laws associated with the “track vehicle” deer hunt. Forty-nine track vehicles were inspected, 156 users were checked, and six citations were issued. Officers utilized airboats, ATV’s, an airplane, and trucks to patrol the areas.

Officers William Carpenter, Nathan Brock, Tyler Harrison, and Reserve Officer Jack Cirrincione responded to a small plane crash in the Everglades near Alligator Alley’s mile marker 40. FWC officers were the first airboat crew to arrive at the crash site.

HENDRY COUNTY

Officer David Burnsed was patrolling on a county road at night when he observed a vehicle drive slowly past his position. He had been watching wildlife feed alongside the road. Officer Burnsed watched the vehicle come to a stop and release a hunting dog near some hogs that were feeding on the roadside. He stopped the vehicle, conducted a hunting inspection and found a hog with its feet tied in the truck’s bed. Two subjects were issued citations for hunting from a county road. Two other subjects were issued written warnings for the same violation.

Officers Mike Lilley and John Greene received a night hunting complaint. They responded and observed four vehicles “working lights” in the same location. After watching for about thirty minutes, the officers confronted the subjects. As the last vehicle was approaching a gate, the officers heard a shot and stopped that vehicle. Three subjects inside the vehicle were in possession of two rifles and a spotlight. The officers issued citations to them for displaying a light while possessing a gun at night.

OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Officers Kyle Patterson and Brandon Lasher were on patrol during predawn hours when they observed a light that was being shined between the rows of a citrus grove. They approached the area and observed an off-road buggy with several subjects on board. They followed the buggy until it exited the grove and then stopped it to conduct an inspection. Two subjects were subsequently cited for hunting at night with a gun and light. One subject was additionally cited for hunting without a hunting license.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer George Anchors assisted a Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office marine deputy with apprehending two subjects who were using an illegal seine net at Bryant Park in Lake Worth. Two citations were issued and the illegal net was seized by the deputy.

Officers patrolled the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area and the Hungryland and Dupuis Wildlife and Environmental Areas during the opening of general gun season. Officer Jeff Haynes assisted five hunters who were stranded in a remote area of J.W. Corbett. Officers Amanda Phillips and David Fowler issued warnings to two subjects for not checking in at Hungryland's check station.

Last May, a multi-agency enforcement detail targeting marine turtle egg poachers resulted in the arrest of a subject for possession of 119 Loggerhead turtle eggs. On November 9, that subject was sentenced in federal court to serve 24 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised probation. The court also issued an order that requires the subject to stay one mile or more away from any Florida beach for the same three year probationary period. Another defendant is already serving time and is due to be released this coming January. He is also required to stay away from any Florida beach for the same three year period.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Officer Kyle Patterson received a complaint from a land lessee about a vehicle that was parked next to the property's gate. Physical evidence indicated that a subject had entered the property. Officer Brandon Lasher responded to assist. The subject was located and found to be in possession of a butchered doe deer. Further investigation revealed that the subject had accessed an adjacent piece of property and hunted there. The subject was arrested for felony trespassing and taken to jail.

SOUTH REGION B

COLLIER COUNTY

Lieutenant Joshua Caraker assisted Collier County Sheriff's Office on a complaint of multiple shots being fired in the woods behind a residential area, south of I-75. After finding a pair of binoculars and fresh foot tracks leading into the woods, Lt. Caraker summoned K-9 Officer Felix Collazo and K-9 Deputy Matthew Griffith. K-9's Jasmine and Tucker assisted in locating three deer, a .243 caliber Winchester rifle, and an electric scooter that had been used for transportation to and from a vehicle parked at a distant location. The hunter is being charged with illegally taking antlerless deer and possession of over the bag limit.

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Joshua Greenier responded to a complaint of a large Green Sea Turtle entangled in a net and buoy lines near American Shoal. The officer located the turtle but was unable to capture it due to its large size. He contacted the agency's turtle coordinator and another assistant to assist with the rescue. The trio returned to American Shoal, located the 300 pound male turtle, and succeeded in lifting it into the vessel. It had numerous injuries as a result of being entangled in the nets and lines. The rescue crew removed the fouled gear and transported the turtle to the turtle hospital for treatment.