

FWC DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT FIELD OPERATIONS

**WEEKLY REPORT
June 19 - 25, 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 Fred Rondeau checked an individual fishing from the Bayou Texar Bridge and found the individual in possession of undersize red drum. A notice to appear citation was issued.

Lieutenant Dan Hahr was on patrol on the Escambia River when he conducted a boating safety check on a small jon boat. The operator exhibited signs of impairment and performed poorly on sobriety tasks. While Lieutenant Hahr was transporting the man to the boat ramp to continue field sobriety tasks, the man jumped out of the boat and swam to a small island near Smith's Fish Camp. Officers Faris Livesay, Kenneth Manning and John Bell arrived to assist, but they could not locate the subject. A warrant was obtained for the subject charging him with boating under the influence (BUI) and resisting arrest without violence.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

On the night of June 13, Officer Steven Cook observed a vessel crossing Apalachicola Bay without navigational lights. A vessel safety inspection found the vessel operator to be under the influence of alcohol. In addition, Officer Cook observed the vessel operator discard a plastic bag containing cannabis. After retrieving the bag of cannabis and concluding the investigation, the vessel operator was arrested and transported to the Franklin County Jail where he was charged with boating under the influence of alcohol, possession of less than twenty grams of cannabis, interference with an FWC officer, and operating a vessel with no navigational lights.

Officers Percy Cook and John Allen Jr. conducted a shellfish inspection in Apalachicola Bay. The officers boarded fourteen vessels and inspected forty-five harvesters. Two uniform boating citations and four resource citations were issued for violations pertaining to insufficient boating safety equipment, no saltwater products license and no Apalachicola Bay oyster permit. The officers also located two harvesters that had active arrest warrants out of Gulf County. The two were arrested and transported to the Franklin County Jail to await extradition on the warrants.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Lieutenant Dan Hahr and Officer Faris Livesay were on patrol on the Blackwater River in Milton when they observed a man operating a vessel. When the operator saw the officers, he made a slight increase in speed and then slowed. The vessel operator then appeared to not notice the officers as they approached him with blue lights. Once stopped, the man showed signs of impairment and performed poorly on field sobriety tasks. The vessel operator was arrested for boating under the influence and transported to the Santa Rosa County Jail where he refused to submit to a breath test.

Officers Fred Rondeau and Keith Clark checked two adults and one child fishing near the Archie Glover Boat Ramp. The two adults were in possession of five red drum, four of which were undersize. Both adults gave false names. The child who was present gave the correct names of the subjects. A computer check of the males revealed both adults had active outstanding warrants, one for failure to pay child support and the other for failure to appear in court. Both subjects were arrested and transported to the Santa Rosa County Jail. In addition to the warrants, the subjects were charged with interference, over-the-bag limit and undersize red drum.

Officers Fred Rondeau and Keith Clark checked an individual fishing under the I-10 Blackwater Bay Bridge. Officer Rondeau found the individual in possession of undersize red drum. The fisherman was issued a notice to appear citation for the violation.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Ryan Nelson conducted a fishery inspection on a vessel in Destin Pass. The inspection revealed undersize cobia. The captain of the vessel was cited for the violation.

Officer Matt Webb conducted separate fishery inspections on two vessels in Destin Pass. The inspections revealed an undersize cobia and a bag limit violation of red snapper. The captains on both vessels were cited for the violations.

Officer Matt Webb conducted two separate fishery inspections on vessels in Destin Pass. The inspections revealed a bag limit violation of red snapper and an undersize amberjack. The captains of the vessels were cited.

Officers Ryan Nelson and Ken White checked a diver under the Destin Bridge. The diver concealed a spear gun when he observed the officers. The spear gun was later recovered and the subject was issued a citation for spearfishing in a prohibited area and failure to properly display the required divers down flag.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Officer Larry Morris was boating while off duty when he observed three subjects in a boat come in off the Choctawhatchee River on Spring Run north of Ebro. He recognized the boat and one subject as one he arrested last year for boating under the influence. Officer Morris observed two of the subjects put on dive gear and entered the water with a spear gun. The two subjects traded out the use of the spear gun and speared two mullet. Officer Morris summoned Officer Lane Kinney to assist, who cited the two Freeport residents for spear fishing in fresh water.

HOLMES COUNTY COPS

Officer Larry Morris taught the laws portion of the Hunter Safety class in Bonifay.

Officer Jimmy Brooks was requested to talk and teach a vacation bible school class at the First Baptist Church in Esto. His topic was on the role of an FWC officer relating to wetlands and swamp habitat and alligators. The small alligator used for a show-and-tell presentation was well received.

BAY COUNTY

Lieutenant Jay Chesser and Officer Mike Nobles were on patrol in the Cat Creek portion of the Econfina Wildlife Management Area when they found several users at a swimming area, who quickly discarded their alcoholic beverages upon seeing the officers. The appropriate citations were issued.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer Todd Hoyle was patrolling the Kirby Pit property owned by Department of Environmental Protection in Columbia County. The property is closed to the public due to health concerns and is amply posted. During his patrol of the property, Officer Hoyle discovered three subjects trespassing. Officer Hoyle also found their vehicle parked within view of seven "No Trespassing" signs. The subjects were cited and given court dates for the violation.

Lieutenant Scott Kihei was on water patrol on the Ichetucknee and Santa Fe rivers. While traveling up the Ichetucknee towards the U.S. Highway 27 Bridge, he saw a diver with no divers down flag. Upon further inspection, the diver was in possession of a Hawaiian sling attempting to spear mullet. The diver was issued a citation for attempting to spear fish in freshwater and was given a written warning for not having a divers down flag displayed.

NASSAU COUNTY

Officer David Waldo responded to the Kings Ferry Boat Ramp to assist with a search and rescue. Nassau County Sheriff's Office reported that a swimmer had jumped from the boat ramp dock and did not resurface. Officer Tim Sweat responded a short time later to assist in the search effort. A dive team from the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office responded and Officers Waldo and Sweat maintained a safety zone while divers were in the water. The missing swimmer's body was recovered a few hours later.

DUVAL COUNTY

Officers Tim Sweat and Chris Holleman conducted a boating safety and fisheries inspection of a subject aboard a vessel in the Fort George River. While conducting the inspection, the officers noticed that the vessel operator showed signs of impairment. Officer Sweat administered standardized field sobriety tasks and determined that the operator of the vessel was impaired. The subject was transported to the Duval County Jail where he submitted a breath sample which measured 0.135.

Officers Jamey Stowell, Eric Hall, Tom Tucker and Adam Small conducted fisheries inspections of vessels fishing in federal waters offshore of Jacksonville. One vessel inspection revealed two subjects in possession of seven red snapper and one vermilion snapper. Each subject was issued a citation for possession of over the bag limit of red snapper. One subject was also issued a citation for not having a valid saltwater fishing license.

While on land patrol, Officer Jamey Stowell noticed a sign posted in front of a house that advertised, "Fresh fish for sale." Officer Stowell knocked on the door and made contact with the owner of the house who showed the officer a large freezer containing a variety of fish. An inspection of the fish revealed two undersize red drum, one undersize black drum, two undersize sheepshead, three undersize spotted sea trout. The subject also did not possess a retail license. Citations were issued.

Officer Alex O'Britis received a complaint about a man illegally keeping an alligator in his backyard. Officer O'Britis went to the residence and found no one home. Officer O'Britis left and parked several blocks away to keep an eye on the residence. Approximately 15 minutes

later, a vehicle pull up and an individual got out and went into the residence. Officer O'Britis made contact with the individual who admitted to having an alligator in his back yard, but was going to let him go. Officer O'Britis found a four foot alligator in a baby pool located in a wooden pen. He caught the alligator and issued the individual a citation. The alligator was released alive back into the wild.

NORTHEAST REGION

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

K-9 Officer Tim Miller was watching beach divers in the area of the Riomar Golf Course in Vero Beach when two men exited the surf with snorkel gear, pole spears and a spear gun. In their dive bag was an out of season, undersize and twice speared snook. Both subjects were charged with the violation and the spearing equipment was seized.

Officer Curtis Suggs was on water patrol in the Atlantic Ocean conducting marine fisheries inspections. One inspection revealed multiple undersize black sea bass. The vessel captain stated he did not have a measuring device and also was not sure on the minimum size requirements. A citation was issued as well as several other boating safety warnings.

FLAGLER COUNTY

The local FWC investigator conducted surveillance underneath the Flagler Beach Bridge and watched a fisherman catch and keep two mangrove snapper approximately 6 inches in length. Officer Eric Meade issued the fisherman a citation for possession of undersize mangrove snapper.

MARION COUNTY

Officer Emily Vought checked a small jon boat operated by a young male at the Ocala Boat Basin. The vessel did not have a HIN number and the young owner stated he found the boat in the Ocala National Forest. The officer called the manufacturer and found the hidden HIN number and was able to reveal the vessel was reported stolen last year. The Marion County Sheriff's Office and the original owner were notified. The officers believed the young subject's story and confirmed it with his mother. He was issued some warnings and educated about possessing stolen property. The vessel was then returned to the very happy original owner.

Officer Kat Kelley issued seven UBCs and 34 boating safety warnings on Lake Weir and the Silver River over the weekend.

Officer Kelley observed a male operating a personal watercraft erratically and conducted a boating safety stop. After the 21-year old male gave her an ID card instead of a driver's license, she became suspicious and had dispatch run a check on him. It revealed he had an active warrant out of St. Lucie County for violation of parole for habitual traffic offenses. He was transported to the county jail.

Officer Kelley observed another young male clumsily trying to maneuver a pontoon boat to the dock. Upon approaching and conducting a boating safety check, she found four intoxicated males with over 24 empty beer cans on board. The brother of the operator pleaded with her to

take him to jail instead of his younger brother, claiming he was the one who had driven the boat until they got to the ramp, when his brother took over. Fortunately, two deputies were also on scene, one carrying a PBT. The 20-year old driver ended up giving a breath sample (resulting in .035) and was charged with the .02 under 21 statute. His father was called to the scene to remove the boat from the water and pick up the operator and passengers.

PUTNAM COUNTY

Lieutenant Ben Allen was contacted by a landowner who had game cameras set up on his property. One of the cameras was set up next to an adjoining piece of property. The landowner showed Lieutenant Allen a picture of two suspects on the adjacent property. This landowner is acquainted with the landowner of the adjacent property and knew the suspects were not permitted to be on the property. Lieutenant Allen back-tracked the suspects to their residence and, at the landowner's request, issued warnings for trespass.

ST JOHNS COUNTY

Officers Mark Tharp and Jeff Hickman were on patrol of the St Johns River when they stopped a vessel for a boating inspection near Palmo Cove. During the stop, the operator showed signs of impairment. After float and field task were performed, the operator was arrested for boating under the influence. He refused to provide a breath sample.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Adam Resnick was conducting fisheries inspections at Manchester Locks when he observed two individuals fishing. After making contact with the individuals, Officer Resnick discovered one of them had an active warrant for his arrest. After the individual was arrested, he was searched and was in possession of marijuana and a drug paraphernalia pipe. The individual was booked into the Charlotte County Jail.

Officer Adam Resnick was following up on a complaint involving an individual in possession of a threatened species. Officer Resnick went to the location and conducted an investigation of the individual in question. Following an interview the individual produced a gopher tortoise with a painted shell. The individual was issued a citation for the violation and the tortoise was taken to Peace River Wildlife Center in Punta Gorda for removal of the paint.

HERNANDO COUNTY

Officer Damon Pulaski observed an individual attempt to put his vessel up on plane in an idle speed zone as he approached Bayport Boat Ramp. When the operator observed Officer Pulaski, he immediately brought the vessel back to idle speed. While conducting a stop of the vessel, the operator showed signs of impairment. The operator performed poorly on field sobriety tasks and was taken to Hernando County Jail where he provided a breath sample of .132 and .133. He was booked in the jail on a charge of boating under the influence and issued warnings for violation of the idle speed zone and an unserviceable fire extinguisher.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Officer Erika Zimmerman observed the occupants of a vehicle shining a light in a manner capable of disclosing the presence of wildlife. Officer Zimmerman stopped the vehicle, which was occupied by two subjects in possession of a flashlight, 6 volt hand-lantern and a 12 gauge shotgun. Both subjects were issued a notice to appear for possession of a gun while displaying a light where wildlife may be found.

LEE COUNTY

While Officer Brian Cazalot was conducting freshwater fisheries inspections on Gin Property, near Alico Road, he observed two individuals fishing and trespassing on Gin Property. As Officer Cazalot approached, one of the individuals fled into the woods with a white bucket, then emerged from the woods without the bucket. Officer Cazalot watched the individuals until they prepared to leave the area. A check of their catch revealed the two were in possession of eleven undersize black bass. The subjects were cited for trespassing and possession of undersize black bass.

Officer Gregory Bryson was conducting fisheries inspections near Big Hickory Pass, when he observed an individual fishing with a cast net. As Officer Bryson approached, the individual attempted to hide his cooler in the mangroves. After Officer Bryson confronted the individual about the cooler, he retrieved it and found it to contain three undersize snook. The individual was cited for over the bag limit of snook, undersize snook, taking snook out of season and taking snook by illegal method. The individual stated it was his first time fishing.

PASCO COUNTY

Officer Paul Van Ost was dispatched to the Cotee River reference a possible impaired vessel operator. Officers from the Port Richey Police Department had taken the operator into custody after they witnessed the operator driving his vessel carelessly in a heavily congested area of the river and violating a restricted speed zone. Officer Van Ost assisted with the administration of the field sobriety tasks and determined that the operator was impaired. The operator was taken to a nearby D.U.I. checkpoint and he provided a breath sample of .143 then was subsequently transported to the Land O Lakes Jail.

Officer Jackey Angelis assisted Hudson Fire Department with the rescue of a female subject onboard a beached vessel. The subject was having an asthma attack. Earlier in the day, the subject and two other individuals were onboard the vessel and sheared off the engines propeller. The vessel drifted to shore in an area where it could not be reached, because of a low tide. When the subject began having respiratory problems, a "Good Samaritan" with an airboat provided assistance and transported the occupants to a dock, where the subject was treated for breathing difficulties.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer George Wells was conducting commercial fishing inspections in Clearwater when he observed a vessel violate a slow speed zone. During the boarding and after conversations with the passengers, Officer Wells determined the fishing vessel was a paying charter. The vessel captain had an expired state charter fishing license and was issued a citation for the license violation and was issued a warning for the speed zone violation.

POLK COUNTY

Officer Darryll Henderson was patrolling the area of District Line Road and observed a suspicious vehicle parked on the right-of-way. As the vehicle began to leave, Officer Henderson attempted to stop it, but the driver accelerated and fled the area. The driver was located after he was positively identified by Officer Henderson. The individuals had been fishing for tilapia with a cast net and were in possession of freshwater game fish. Both individuals were charged with taking freshwater game fish by an illegal method and the driver was also charged with reckless operation of a motor vehicle

SOUTH REGION A

BROWARD COUNTY

Lieutenant Dave Bingham participated in a press conference designed to promote scuba diving safety. The group of sponsors included Divers Alert Network (DAN), Diving Equipment and Marketing Association (DEMA), U.S. Coast Guard and FWC. A public service announcement and a website called Beadiver.com were created to inform the public of dive shops locations where they can have their equipment inspected prior to the opening of lobster season.

Officer Nathan Brock observed four subjects trespassing and fishing in Stormwater Treatment Areas (STA) 3 and 4. An inspection of their catch revealed seven oversize black bass. All subjects were cited for the fishery violation as well as fishing in the STA.

Officer Nathan Brock observed a suspicious, unoccupied truck at a boat ramp along U.S. Highway 27. A computer check revealed that the vehicle was stolen and the case was turned over to the Broward Sheriff's Office.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Jamie Young encountered a subject at the Boynton boat ramp who was in possession of a tarpon without the requisite tarpon tag. The subject was cited for the violation.

Officer Leblanc, Investigator Carcasses and Lieutenant Laubenberger conducted fisheries inspections in the southern end of the county. One citation was issued for no fishing license and another for taking freshwater game fish by an illegal method (cast netting). The officers had observed a subject throwing a large cast net and when checked, found him in possession of largemouth bass.

SOUTH REGION B

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Officer S. Mayberg observed a subject selling fish to a customer at a cleaning station behind his commercial fishing boat at Haulover Marina. The subject could not produce the requisite retail seafood dealer license. Officer Mayberg spoke to the individual who had bought the fish and obtained a written statement that said he had bought the fish for twenty dollars. The subject was then issued a citation for the violation. A written warning was also issued to the customer buying the fish for purchasing from an unlicensed vendor.

Officer Shalom Mayberg and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agent McKenney acted upon information received from the previous day. At dusk, three subjects were seen spearing snook and spearfishing too close to Government Cut jetty. The officers conducted surveillance for approximately four hours. Officers Robert Fernandez and Luis Delgado assisted. Though no subjects were caught spearing snook, the officers' combined efforts yielded two citations for spearfishing within 100 feet of the jetty and two citations for failure to display the requisite dive flag. One subject was arrested for an active arrest warrant.

FWC fishery biologist Kelly Gestring reported that an employee of a local pet shop brought an unknown fish to the FWC Fisheries Laboratory to have it identified. The fish was identified as a Trahira (*Hoplias malabaricus*)- a prohibited species in Florida. The wholesale fish dealer was inspected and fifteen more Trahira were located in the warehouse. The owner said that he ordered the fish from a supplier listed as Wolf Fish and that he did not know they were illegal to possess. The owner showed proof that he only sold the one specimen to the local pet shop. He was cited for unlawful possession of a prohibited species of fish by Lieutenant Reynolds. The fifteen illegal fish were seized.

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Joshua Peters and Jill Izsak charged several fishermen for violations involving undersize dolphin during a fisheries inspection bayside of Marathon. The subjects each received citations. A second fisheries inspection occurred behind the Key Colony Beach Police Department. The officers issued four citations to subjects they observed filleting dolphin behind a private residence. Violations included possession of six undersize dolphin and five over-the-limit.

Officer Joshua Peters responded to a complaint that resulted in the arrest of a subject for criminal mischief and trespass. The boat owner of a grounded vessel was told by his friend that a subject was stripping items from the grounded vessel. When the Officer Peters arrived, the subject left the vessel and tried to hide the tools he was using.

Officer Joshua Peters assisted Monroe County Sheriff's Office personnel with the recovery of a decedent from a sailing vessel on the north side of Cow Key Channel. The officer transported the county's homicide/forensic team, who will be investigating the death. The cause of death does not appear to be boating accident related.

FWC honor guard member, Carlo Morato participated in the funeral of Miami-Dade Police Department Officer Giovanni Gonzalez who was killed while on duty in a vehicle accident on June 16.