

# FWC

## Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report



**May 11, 2018 through May 17, 2018**

*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.*

***Patrol, Protect, Preserve***

### **NORTHWEST REGION**

#### **CASES**

##### **BAY COUNTY**

Officer Brady was conducting Joint Enforcement Agency (JEA) patrols when he noticed a vessel with three people on board actively fishing and conducted a resource inspection of the vessel. During the inspection, he found a gag grouper and six gray triggerfish in a cooler. At the time of inspection, gag grouper was closed in both the state and federal waters off Bay County. The captain of the vessel took responsibility and was issued citations for the violations.

Reserve Officer Cooper was conducting JEA patrols near the Panama City Pass when he noticed a vessel with three people on board returning from fishing. He conducted a resource inspection of the vessel and found a cooler in the vessel with a gag grouper inside. At the time of inspection, gag grouper was closed in both the state and federal waters off Bay County. The captain of the vessel took responsibility for the violation and was issued a citation.

##### **ESCAMBIA COUNTY**

While on patrol in Bayou Chico, Officers Cushing and Land heard a request for law enforcement over the VHF radio. Officer Cushing contacted the complainant who stated that another boater hit his vessel at the fuel dock and continued without stopping. The complainant indicated that the operator may have been drinking. After receiving a detailed description of the vessel and the operator, Officers Land and Cushing saw the vessel underway a few hundred yards away. They followed the vessel to a local marina

where the described operator was docking. Officer Land contacted the operator and saw many indicators of possible impairment. He then conducted a BUI investigation and determined that the operator was impaired. The operator was arrested and booked into Escambia County Jail.

Officer Cushing received an electronic complaint regarding subjects landing gag grouper during the closed season. Several FWC officers assisted Officer Cushing to identify the vessel and help track down the subjects in question. Officer Cushing conducted interviews with two of the subjects. One of them admitted to catching and keeping the grouper. He stated that the captain of the vessel identified the fish as black grouper. Appropriate charges were filed for the violation.

Officers Allgood and Manning checked three individuals fishing approximately 12 miles off the Pensacola Pass. An inspection revealed the individuals in possession of two undersized triggerfish. Information was taken and federal citations will be issued for the violation.

#### FRANKLIN COUNTY

Officers Travis and Kossey were on water patrol in the Carrabelle River when they saw a boat tied to the Carrabelle City Dock. The officers conducted a resource inspection on the boat and during the inspection they discovered seven red snapper, two red grouper, and one gag grouper hidden in a compartment in the cuddy cabin. Also during the stop, they located a small amount of cannabis. The officers issued eight misdemeanor citations for various violations.

K-9 Officer Anderson and Officer Richardson were on water patrol in the Carrabelle River when they saw a vessel returning from an offshore fishing trip. They contacted the captain who invited them on board to conduct a resource inspection. During the inspection, they found an undersized red grouper and an undersized gag grouper. The two-undersized grouper were seized as evidence and the subject was cited for the undersized fish, expired registration, and expired flares.

#### LEON COUNTY

K-9 Officer Anderson was on routine patrol when he saw a Florida Highway Patrol trooper running across Bannerman Road with his taser out. The trooper stated that he just had someone run from him who was involved in a hit and run accident and had an outstanding warrant. Officer Anderson pulled off the road and deployed FWC K-9 Scout in the block of woods where the suspect had fled. K-9 Scout tracked the male subject for approximately 350 yards when a Good Samaritan told them the subject had jumped in a vehicle and left the area. The trooper called the track off and advised that he would issue a warrant for the subject.

#### OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Pifer received information regarding an individual attempting to sell red snapper via Facebook. Screen shots of the original posts were obtained and the owner of the Facebook page was identified. During an interview, the owner of the Facebook page admitted to harvesting red snapper during the closed season and then posting the fish for sale on Facebook. The individual did not possess a saltwater products license or a license to retail saltwater products. Charges were filed through the State Attorney's Office.

Officers Pifer and Corbin were on vessel patrol conducting state fisheries inspections in the Destin Pass when they saw a vessel returning from the Gulf of Mexico displaying rods and reels. The officers stopped the vessel and determined it was returning from a fishing trip. The fisheries inspection revealed two undersized gray triggerfish. The vessel operator was cited and issued a notice to appear citation.

Officers Jarvis and Maltais monitored the return of a commercial fishing vessel to conduct a federal and state fisheries inspection. The commercial vessel was licensed federally with a Gulf Reef Fish Permit. The permit requires the vessel's owner/operator to report all landing times and location to law enforcement. The vessel landed at a different location than what was reported, a violation of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The violation was documented accordingly and a National Marine Fisheries Service law enforcement officer will follow up on the reporting and landing violations.

#### WALTON COUNTY

Officers Tison and Bradshaw were on water patrol when they saw a vessel displaying bright lights into the water in a manner commonly used for gigging and bow fishing. As the officers approached the vessel they saw a subject was bow fishing and he stated he had not had any luck. An inspection of a live well in his vessel revealed a large bass with a hole in it consistent with being shot with an arrow from bow fishing equipment. The subject admitted to shooting the bass and was cited for taking game fish by a prohibited method.

#### FEDERAL WATERS

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel Intrepid, Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Kossey, Nelson, and Travis located two vessels near each other and stopped both vessels at the same time. During the stops, officers located six gag grouper on one vessel and two gag grouper on the other vessel during federal closure. The officers took the appropriate action regarding the violations on the two vessels.

While aboard offshore patrol vessel Northwest FINCAT, Officers Cushing and Land were on water patrol in federal waters approximately 17 miles south of the Pensacola Pass. While conducting a marine fisheries inspection of a recreational vessel, Officer Land discovered undersized greater amberjack. The appropriate action was taken for the violation. Soon thereafter, Officer Land was conducting another marine fisheries inspection of a recreational vessel with six persons onboard. He discovered six greater

amberjack – five of the six fish were undersized. The appropriate action was taken for the violations.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel Intrepid, Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Kossey, Nelson, and Travis stopped two vessels within an hour of each other and both vessels and its occupants were found to be in possession of gag grouper during federal closure. The officers took the appropriate action for the violations.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel Intrepid, Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Kossey, Nelson, and Travis stopped two vessels within a few minutes of each other. The officers located undersized red grouper and gag grouper during federal closure on one of the vessels. The officers located multiple undersized greater amberjack aboard the other vessel. The officers took the appropriate action for the violations aboard the two vessels.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel Vigilance, Officers Matechik, Rockwell, and Nelson were on patrol focusing on compliance of Turtle Exclusionary Devices (TEDs). During the patrol south of Franklin County, the officers located and inspected five commercial shrimping vessels with some having significant violations of the legal specifications of the TEDs. The appropriate actions were taken with both warnings and citations for the violations.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel Intrepid, Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Kossey, Nelson, and Travis located a vessel anchored with multiple people fishing. As the officers approached, one of the individuals tried to remove a cut-up piece of vermillion snapper from his hook that he was using for bait. The officers directed all the individuals to reel their lines up so that the bait could be inspected. One of the individuals stated had a whole vermillion snapper intentionally hooked as bait. The officers took the appropriate action for the violation of using reef fish as bait.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel Vigilance, Officers Matechik, Rockwell, and Boyd were on patrol focusing on compliance of Turtle Exclusionary Devices (TEDs). During the patrol south of Franklin County, the officers checked seven commercial shrimp trawling vessels for TED compliance. There were many boating safety, resource violations, and violations for various TED compliance issues. The appropriate action was taken for the violations. A citation for possession of marijuana less than 20 grams was also issued.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel Intrepid, Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Boyd, Nelson, and Richardson located four different vessels that were in possession of gag grouper during federal closure. The officers took the appropriate action for the violations that were located aboard the four vessels.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel Intrepid, Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Boyd, Nelson, and Richardson located a large cabin vessel. They circled around the vessel approximately a mile away and approached the vessel from an angle the occupants

were less likely to see them approaching. They pulled up to the vessel's stern and after boarding, located a large plastic bag in an easily accessible compartment on the stern transom. The bag contained a large quantity of fish fillets. An inspection of the fillets revealed a small piece of skin that was consistent with red snapper. An interview of the occupants resulted in statements that they had filleted multiple red snapper and gag grouper and bagged them. The appropriate action was taken for the violations of possession of red snapper and gag grouper during federal closure and for failure to land fish in whole condition.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel Intrepid, Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Hughes and Korade were on patrol in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico south of Franklin County. During the patrol, they located four different vessels that were in possession of gag grouper during federal closure. The appropriate actions were taken for the violations.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel Northwest FINCAT, Officers Cushing and Land patrolled multiple days in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. During their patrols, the officers discovered four different vessels with a total of five greater amberjack violations. The violations included size limit and bag limit and the appropriate action was taken.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Rockwell responded to a call from a lost kayaker on the Blackwater River. He talked to the kayaker by cell phone and asked him to describe his surroundings. Officer Rockwell recognized the area by the description, located the man and returned him safely to his vehicle. The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office and Fire and Rescue also assisted with the search.

### SANTA ROSA COUNTY

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel Northwest FINCAT, the crew responded to the report of a vessel explosion gulf side of Ft. Pickens with people in the water. Once on scene, the crew determined that all persons were accounted for and there were no significant injuries. Three of the five persons onboard were transported by the Northwest FINCAT for medical attention. Officer Land is conducting a boating accident investigation.

### WAKULLA COUNTY

Officer Morales was conducting vessel patrol on the Wakulla River near the Mysterious Waters community when he saw an individual floating down the river on a pool float. As he was setting off to check on the subject, a group of people on the dock shouted that the man needed help immediately. Officer Morales could see that the man was showing signs of distress. He arrived and quickly provided aid by throwing two life jackets to the

man. The individual was unable to grab or hold onto them. As the man appeared to slip into unconsciousness and go underwater, Officer Morales jumped into the water and swam to the man. He pulled him above the surface and the man regained consciousness and complied with instructions. Officer Morales held the man above water until Officers Hughes and Sauls arrived to help shortly afterwards. Together, they pulled the victim onto a patrol vessel and returned him to the dock where he was evaluated and treated by EMS.

## **NORTH CENTRAL REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **ALACHUA COUNTY**

Officers Reith and Drew were working water patrol on the Santa Fe River near Blue Springs State Park when they saw individuals smoking what appeared to be cannabis. After stopping them on the river, the smell and other items located on the vessel confirmed their suspicions. Citations were issued for less than 20 grams of cannabis. Later the same day, the two officers made an arrest by warrant in the same area.

#### **HAMILTON COUNTY**

Officers McDonald and Johnston responded to a report of a boating accident with injury at the Gibson Park boat ramp in Hamilton County. One subject sustained a knee injury and minor cuts after his vessel struck a rock along the Suwannee River shoreline. The victim was transported to Lake City Medical Center for treatment. Officer McDonald concluded that one of the contributing factors of the accident was a steering issue with the vessel. The investigation is ongoing.

#### **CLAY COUNTY**

A Keystone Heights resident saw a female cleaning paint brushes and rollers in Gatorbone Lake. A large cloudy area of paint was visible on a good portion of the lake. Environmental Investigators Terrones and Starling interviewed the female and her fiancé and after initially claiming to have hired an unknown painter, they both admitted that the female had cleaned the equipment in the lake since they had no running water at their home. A resource citation was issued for discharging waste to waters of the state.

## **NORTHEAST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **PUTNAM COUNTY**

Officer Bernard was conducting fisheries inspections at Kenwood Boat Ramp when he contacted two male subjects. Both subjects were in possession of three black bass each that measured over 16 inches. Both subjects were issued criminal citations for possessing more than one bass over 16 inches.

#### VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer McKee was on water patrol on the St. Johns River when he saw a vessel violating the idle speed zone. During the stop, Officer McKee saw indicators that led him to believe the operator was impaired. He conducted seated field sobriety tasks on his patrol vessel and subsequently placed the subject under arrest for boating under the influence. The subject provided a breath sample which was above the legal limit. The subject was booked into the Volusia County Jail.

#### INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

While on vessel patrol, Officer Matthews conducted a resource inspection on a vessel returning to the boat ramp. During the inspection it was discovered that the men were in possession of two sharks not in whole condition, one undersized spotted seatrout and no fishing license. Citations were issued for the violations.

While on late night patrol, Lieutenant Lightsey saw a vessel returning from drift fishing at Sebastian Inlet. A resource inspection revealed the operator was in possession of one oversized snook. A citation was issued for the violation.

#### BREVARD COUNTY

While on foot patrol under the Eau Gallie Causeway, Officer Balgo saw an individual fishing on the catwalk. A resource inspection located several undersized mangrove snapper. The individual was issued a citation.

While on foot patrol along the Sebastian River, Officer Balgo saw an individual cast netting. A resource inspection was conducted and the officer located several undersized sheepshead and an undersized black drum. The subject received citations for the violations.

While patrolling the Banana River, Officer Balgo and Investigator Horst saw an individual cast netting along SR528. The officers beached their vessel and approached the individual. A resource inspection located three undersized sheepshead and an undersized spotted sea trout. Citations were issued for the violations.

#### COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

#### INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Officer Dubose participated in the Indian River County Water Safety Day. He brought a patrol vessel and an alligator and spoke to the children about water safety and living with alligators in Florida. Fifty-six people were in attendance.

## **SOUTHWEST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **CHARLOTTE COUNTY**

Officer Mitchell was on land patrol in a local management area when he came across a man and asked to check his area use permit. The man did not have the required permit to be in the area; however, he had an active warrant for his arrest. Officer Mitchell arrested the man for the outstanding warrant and delivered him to the county jail without incident.

Officer Salem was on patrol when he came across two men near a canal on private property. Officer Salem walked around the side of their vehicle and saw three cast nets and a bucket on the bank of the canal. The men admitted they had caught some fish. After inspecting the bucket, Officer Salem found some brim, a bass, and tilapia. Neither of the men had a fishing license, and Officer Salem educated them on freshwater fishing regulations. Officer Salem issued two infractions for the license violations and warnings for illegal method of catching game fish.

Officers Zampella and Birchfield were on land patrol when they came across three men dragging a dead hog out of a local management area. Hunting season is closed and taking hogs is prohibited. The men were from out of state and said they did research on public hunting land so they could hunt hogs in Florida. The men all had a valid management area permit, but claimed they did not know it was illegal to hunt hogs on the area at that time. Officer Zampella found the men had entered the management area from a non-designated area. The men were issued citations for entering the management area from a non-designated area and warnings for taking a wild hog during a non-hunting period.

#### **HERNANDO COUNTY**

Officer Canamero received an anonymous tip regarding someone keeping a gopher tortoise. Officer Canamero located a residence that had two gopher tortoises locked inside a cage. A subject was identified and after the investigation was completed, the subject was charged and cited accordingly. The tortoises were released unharmed.

Officer Henry was conducting resource and fishing license inspections. One subject who was fishing was found to have an active nationwide warrant for drugs. The subject was arrested and taken to the Hernando County Jail to await extradition.

## HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

While on patrol at the Funlan Drive-in Market, Officers Messman and Rorer conducted a saltwater products retail and wholesale license inspection on a seafood vendor. The vendor could not produce valid receipts or documentation of where several fish on display for sale came from. In Florida, a business or person selling saltwater products to the consumer must have valid documentation of where the saltwater products came from. The vendor was cited for the violation.

While conducting boating safety and fisheries inspections at the Seminole boat ramp, Officer Pettifer saw an individual attempt to back a vessel trailer down the boat ramp. The individual attempted to straighten the trailer approximately 15 to 20 times. Officer Pettifer approached the individual on foot and asked if he needed some help. The individual ignored Officer Pettifer and continued to back the trailer down the ramp. Officer Pettifer detected a strong odor of an alcoholic beverage coming from the passenger compartment of the truck. He instructed the individual to exit the vehicle. After conducting field sobriety tasks, Officer Pettifer determined the individual was operating a vehicle while his normal faculties were impaired by alcohol or drugs. He was arrested and transported to the Hillsborough County Jail where he refused to provide a breath sample.

While conducting boating safety inspections at Williams Park, Officers Rorer and Pettifer saw a vessel being operated by an individual that appeared to be intoxicated. Through the course of the boating safety inspection the individual was unsteady on his feet and had trouble concentrating and following simple instructions given by the officers. Officer Rorer administered seated standardized field sobriety tasks. After completing the field sobriety tasks, Officer Rorer determined the individual was operating a vessel while his normal faculties were impaired by alcohol or drugs. He was arrested and transported to the Hillsborough County Jail where he refused to provide a breath sample.

Officers Berg and Guerin conducted a resource inspection on a vessel returning from an offshore fishing trip. Upon inspection the officers located a 20-inch gag grouper that the captain attempted to conceal. The individual was cited for possession of undersized gag grouper and for possession during closed season.

Lieutenant Holcomb, along with Officers Enos and Berg responded to a complaint that an individual had shot three red shouldered hawks and placed them in a dumpster behind a residence. The officers located the hawk carcasses and began taking statements from witnesses in the area. After a few hours of investigating, the officers located the subject who shot the three hawks in a nearby mobile home park. The individual admitted to shooting and killing all three hawks with a pellet gun. He was cited for taking the red shouldered hawks which is prohibited under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

While on patrol Officers Hinds, Gaudion, and Pettifer saw an individual sitting on a bench at the North Skyway Fishing Pier. He opened a cooler that contained legal jack crevalle and grunts. The officers noticed a cooler in the passenger compartment of his vehicle covered with a towel. An inspection of that cooler revealed 20 mangrove snapper, one 14-inch undersized gag grouper, and one 11-inch undersized sheepshead. Seventeen of the 20 mangrove snapper were undersized. The individual was cited for possession of over the bag limit and undersized mangrove snapper, possession of undersized and out of season gag grouper, and possession of undersized sheepshead.

## PASCO COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Hough was traveling to facility inspections when he saw a Chevrolet pickup and trailer combination hauling 92 waste/used tires. Investigator Hough conducted a traffic stop on the truck and trailer which resulted in the driver being issued a notice to appear citation, misdemeanor charge, transporting waste tires without a valid permit, driving while license suspended/revoked (CDL) with knowledge (misdemeanor), expired tag (infraction), 2 written warnings for failure to present vehicle insurance, and failure to provide proof of vehicle insurance. The individual was arrested and the truck and trailer was turned over to a licensed driver. The defendant's spouse was advised how to obtain a temporary waste tire collector permit. The relief driver was instructed to transport the waste tires back to their point of origin.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

## HERNANDO COUNTY

Officers from Hernando and Pasco Counties responded to the Croom Wildlife Management Area (WMA) to search for a missing hiker. After a brief foot search the subject was located deceased. The Sheriff's Office is handling the death investigation.

## **SOUTH REGION A**

## CASES

## HENDRY COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck was on patrol late at night in the Spirit of the Wild WMA. He saw two suspicious vehicles blocking a trail and approached the vehicles on foot. One vehicle was empty while the other vehicle was occupied by two subjects. Officer Brodbeck contacted both subjects to discuss the violation. The vehicle owner consented to a search and a methamphetamine pipe was found near the driver's seat. The driver of the vehicle was issued a notice to appear (citation) for possession of drug paraphernalia.

## MARTIN COUNTY

Officers Morrow and Rogers were conducting saltwater fisheries inspections. After making contact with a subject, he presented a non-resident fishing license which he removed from a vehicle. When asked for identification to verify the information on his fishing license, the subject advised he didn't have one. When asked how he had gotten to the location, he advised that his girlfriend had dropped him off. The officers continued checks of the area and saw the subject leaving, driving the vehicle. The officers conducted a traffic stop on the subject and verified that he did not have a license. The subject was then arrested for driving without a license. His vehicle was towed from the scene and the tag was seized.

Officer Cobo responded to a dog bite at the campground in JD State Park. A dog pulled loose from its owner and tried to attack another dog. It bit a woman on the wrist as she tried to shield her dog. The woman was taken to the hospital and received fourteen stitches. The owner of the dog received a citation.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Toby responded to a complaint regarding marmoset monkeys. Upon arrival, he found an individual in possession of four marmoset monkeys. The individual's license for the monkeys had expired five years ago. In addition, the caging was too small and she was not able to provide the required records of acquisition. One misdemeanor citation and two warnings were issued for the violations. The individual is renewing her license and making the necessary corrections. Officer Kirkland assisted with this incident.

#### OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck was on patrol conducting boating safety inspections. An airboat with a single occupant returned to the launch and upon contacting the operator, multiple signs of impairment were observed. After performing poorly during field sobriety tasks, the subject was placed under arrest for BUI. At the Okeechobee County Jail, the subject refused to provide a breath sample and was issued an additional citation.

#### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Defeo was on land patrol in the Corbett Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when he saw a vehicle driving through the "residents only" area of the Everglades Youth Camp. He stopped the vehicle for traffic violations and the driver was unable to produce any insurance or registration, and the tag attached on the vehicle was not assigned. The driver was cited for the violations.

Officer Trawinski stopped a vessel transiting the Boynton Beach Inlet to perform a fisheries inspection. Officer Trawinski checked the catch and discovered undersized mahi and undersized mutton snapper. The subject was cited appropriately.

Officers Trawinski and Defeo responded to a complaint of a juvenile killing mottled ducks in a residential neighborhood in West Palm Beach. After interviewing a

complainant, officers discovered that muscovy ducks had been targeted. Muscovy ducks are an invasive species and are not protected, except from animal abuse. The case was turned over to Palm Beach County Animal Care and Control for further investigation.

Officer Langley was on patrol during a heavy storm when he spotted a subject taking cover from the rain under the Spanish River Bridge in Boca Raton. As Officer Langley approached the subject, he saw the subject empty a bucket into the water. Upon questioning the subject, he admitted that there was an undersized mangrove snapper in the bucket he dumped. Officer Langley located the undersized snapper in the water. The subject also did not possess a saltwater shoreline license. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officer Boyd and Officer Langley were on vessel patrol in the intracoastal waterway in Boca Raton. While patrolling they saw a group of teenagers waterskiing. They saw the skiers not wearing personal flotation devices (PFDs). The captain of the vessel also did not have a fire extinguisher on board his vessel, which is required by law. The captain was issued a written warning for no fire extinguisher and the skiers were given warnings for not wearing PFDs.

Officers Defeo, Stone and Kirkland responded to what they believed were two individuals trapped in their vehicle while it was sinking in Corbett Wildlife Management Area. When Officer Stone arrived on scene he found both individuals to be safe and in good health. The Jeep Liberty was stuck in a buggy hole and the driver was ticketed for driving off trail, and the vehicle was towed. While still on scene, officers received another call for individuals lost nearby in the management area. Officer Stone contacted the lost individuals by phone and they told him a buggy was leading them to the main trail. The officer's waited for the vehicles to exit the woods onto the main trail and when they arrived each driver was issued a citation for driving off-trail. In addition, one vehicle was also issued a misdemeanor citation for unassigned tag and an infraction for unregistered vehicle in the WMA outside of hunting season.

Officers Cobo, Morrow, Godward and Pecko assisted the West Palm Beach Police with recovering a stolen vehicle in the JW Corbett Area. One subject was arrested for theft of the vehicle.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

FWC received a BOLO from Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office about a silver alert. The BOLO indicated that an elderly man had been missing for 2 days. PBSO requested a ping from the subject's cell phone. Officer Stone, and Investigators Fowler and Warren responded to the Corbett WMA. They started searching near the South Check station. They found the man in fair condition and called for EMS. His vehicle had

stopped running after going through deep water. The officers directed EMS back to the remote location. The man was taken to the hospital for evaluation.

## MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

### MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Kirkland received a call from the Martin County State Correctional Facility about a small alligator trapped in a water holding tank on the property. With the help of Corrections Sargent Wenrich, Officer Kirkland was able to rescue the 3' alligator in the ten-foot-deep holding tank with a rod and reel and catch pole. The alligator was released in a large pond on the property.

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Defeo responded to a report that a deer had been hit by a vehicle and was on the side of the road, unable to move. When he arrived on scene, it was determined that the deer was seriously injured beyond rehabilitation. The deer was humanely euthanized.

Officer Schroer and Officer Stone responded to a leatherback sea turtle in distress call in the town of Tequesta. The leatherback sea turtle had been struck by a boat and was seen swimming abnormally in the intracoastal waterway. With the help of FWC sea turtle biologists, a veterinarian and Good Samaritans, the leatherback was retrieved from the water and transported to the Loggerhead Marine Life Center for rehabilitation.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROL

### MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Willems, Officer Morrow and Officer Pecko conducted a special detail in northern Martin County which focused on boating safety inspections in low traffic areas. The officers stopped several vessels and addressed multiple boating safety violations. Numerous citations and warnings were issued.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Morrow attended a community outreach event at a local elementary school along with the Martin County Sherriff's Office, Martin County Fire Department, Department of Homeland Security and the Stuart Police Department. While there, students were educated on the FWC mission, given the opportunity to ask questions, and had lunch with the officers.

## **SOUTH REGION B**

### **CASES**

#### **MIAMI DADE COUNTY**

Officer Hernandez was on water patrol and stopped to inspect a commercial stone crab vessel whose crew was collecting traps due to the upcoming season closure. During the fishery inspection, the officer noticed a returning recreational fishing vessel suddenly veer off its intended course after the operator saw the nearby FWC patrol vessel. Officer Hernandez terminated the inspection of the stone crab vessel and stopped the suspicious recreational vessel. There were three subjects on board and when the officer completed his fisheries inspection, he discovered two undersized red grouper and two undersized yellowtail snapper on board. One subject claimed responsibility for the undersized fish and was cited for the violations.

#### **MONROE COUNTY**

Monroe County Sheriff's Office requested FWC's assistance in the apprehension of the fleeing subject that started at the 72 mile marker in Monroe County northbound and ended at the 117 mile marker of US 1 in Miami Dade County. Numerous FWC officers assigned to both counties either followed or assisted in shutting down various intersections or roadways as the driver, at one point, crossed over the median into the southbound lanes while still traveling north. FWC officers assisted at 4 locations where spike strips were deployed. The driver finally pulled over on his own after all four of the tires on his vehicle had disintegrated and he was traveling on just the rims. The subject was taken into custody by both MCSO and FWC without incident. No civilians or officers were injured nor were any vehicles damaged during this incident.

Officer Piekenbrock and Officer Wagner were on water patrol in Monroe County. They assisted USCG with a recreational fishing vessel inspection near American Shoal. A subject aboard the vessel was found to have two active warrants, one out of Monroe County and one out of Broward County. The subject was placed under arrest and transferred to a local marina. Officer Messier transported the subject to the Stock Island Jail.

Officers Tafoya and Rhoda, along with Lieutenant McDaniel were on water patrol near the area of Card Sound Bridge. As they were going under the bridge they noticed several fishing rods protruding from behind the wooden bunkers that mark the channel. Upon closer inspection, they found two individuals fishing from the bridge supports. The individuals paddled a small canoe there from shore. Neither of the men had identification with them. Officer Tafoya searched FCIC/NCIC and found that one of the subjects was wanted for dangerous drugs out of Miami Dade County. The warrant and extradition was confirmed a short time later. The man was arrested and transported to Plantation Key Detention Center.

Officers Wagner, Mason, and Piekenbrock were on federal water patrol in the Looe Key Existing Management Area when they saw a vessel with dive flag displayed. They waited for the diver to surface and approached. The diver had spearfishing equipment and speared fish. Looe Key Existing Management Area is closed to spearfishing. Once on board the officers discovered the vessel was a commercial fishing boat that had commercial quantities of speared fish. The operator of the vessel was issued two federal citations for possessing spearfishing equipment and possessing more than five speared fish in the management area.

## COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Plussa and Lieutenant Mahoney were conducting water patrol near Keewaydin Island when they saw a vessel pass dangerously close to other vessels and swimmers. They activated their lights and signaled the vessel to stop. The operator saw them and quickly grounded his vessel into the beach and jumped off, falling into the water. Officer Plussa's investigation determined the operator was impaired and arrested him for BUI. During an interview, the suspect admitted to being impaired and under the influence. The subject was placed under arrest for boating under the influence.

Officer Plussa received a call regarding a person potentially taking a gopher tortoise from Delnor Wiggins State Park. Officer Kleis and McVaney responded to the scene and saw a gopher tortoise on the ground near the described suspect vehicle. After obtaining witness statements, video evidence from a witness, and a statement from the suspect, the officers filed charges with the state attorney's office for prosecution for the illegal take of a gopher tortoise. The tortoise was released alive and unharmed.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROL

### COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Arbogast, Kleis, McVaney, Oldsen, Tidwell, and Yaxley worked a joint detail with Everglades National Park Service, focusing on commercial stone crab vessels returning to port. The officers stopped multiple vessels for compliance with safety regulations, proper licensing, and resource regulations. During one stop, a search of the vessel revealed a bag containing multiple fish hidden away between plastic bins used to transport stone crab claws. The fish were reef fish and not in whole condition. A crew member took responsibility for keeping the fish and the violation of the fish not being in whole condition. Officer McVaney charged the suspect accordingly and the fish were seized as evidence.

FWC officers from Collier County and Monroe County, along with the crews of the offshore patrol vessels C.T. Randall and Trident, conducted their annual joint-agency operation in conjunction with the 2018 Naples Canoe Race. FWC coordinated with Collier County Sheriff's Office marine, aviation, youth relations, and emergency response team, along with Marco Island and Naples Police Department marine units, Collier County Fire Rescue, and the US Coast Guard. FWC officers stopped over 150

vessels, checking over 1,300 occupants. They issued over 50 citations, 95 written warnings, over 170 verbal educational warnings, and assisted five subjects. FWC officers made 4 BUI arrests, 1 DUI arrest, citing three additional misdemeanors for criminal vessel violations, and assisted other agencies with 3 BUI arrests, 1 disorderly intoxication arrest, 1 resisting arrest, and 2 civil disputes. There were no reported injuries or boating accidents from the public.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### MIAMI DADE COUNTY

To kick off safe boating week May 19 - May 25, 2018, Duty Officers Colon, Dunn and Roberson, along with Officers Washington and Albert participated in an outreach event at Bass Pro Shops. They interacted with the public, answering questions about boating safety and other informative/helpful resources available.

Officer Washington and Duty Officer Rao gave a presentation for career day and brought exotic wildlife. Using non-native snakes (ball/Burmese python), they educated 200+ students about illegal release and threats posed by invasive species, importance of pet amnesty and selecting pets wisely.

### MONROE COUNTY

Officer Dube assisted personnel from the Divers Alert Network "DAN" from North Carolina on safety tips for the upcoming lobster mini-season. Officer Dube was filmed while answering questions and giving snorkel and scuba diving safety tips to viewers that will be heading to the Keys for the upcoming lobster season.

### COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Plussa conducted an outreach effort in response to recent burrowing owl complaints involving incidental take by residential construction companies on Marco Island. Officer Plussa stopped at 13 separate active construction sites where burrowing owl or gopher tortoise holes were present and spoke with workers, providing education on applicable regulations and thanking them for operating in compliance. Four of these sites had previous documented calls for suspected violations, but all were found to be in compliance.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### MONROE COUNTY

A single vessel accident was investigated by Officers McKay and Thompson when a reported abandoned flats skiff was found in mangrove trees in Key Largo near Jewfish Creek. With USCG and Tow Boat US on scene, all searched the area and the vessel for signs of any occupants with negative results. The sheriff's office went by the registered

owner's home where his parents only knew that he went out fishing earlier in the day. Around midnight FWC officers learned that the owner was safe at his girlfriend's residence in Miami. Further follow up over the next several days resulted in FWC officers meeting with the owner. Post Miranda he admitted to operating the boat when it ran into the mangroves and not contacting law enforcement to report the incident. Officer McKay completed his boating accident investigation and cited the owner for several navigation rule violations. Officer Thompson is filing a warrant for the failure to report the accident to authorities. All persons were accounted for and no injuries resulted from the accident. The vessel had around \$5,000 in damages.