

# FWC

## Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report



**June 15, 2018 through June 21, 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**

Reserve Officer Cooper was conducting resource inspections of vessels returning from fishing in St. Andrews Bay prior to the beginning of the recreational red snapper season. During an inspection of one vessel, he found the vessel's occupants to be in possession of undersized red snapper and undersized scamp. The captain of the vessel was issued a citation for possession of red snapper during closed season and warnings for undersized red snapper and undersized scamp.

Officer McMillion was contacted by Lt. Wass de Czege, who was off duty, about individuals at the Mexico Beach Canal that were in possession of gray triggerfish during the closed season. Officer McMillion located the individuals in possession of seven gray triggerfish during the closure. The captain of the vessel was issued a citation for the violation.

Officer McMillion was conducting resource inspections at the Mexico Beach Canal boat ramp when he saw a vessel with several individuals on board returning from a day of fishing. While he was conducting a resource inspection of the vessel the occupants stated that they had caught snapper and grouper. During the inspection, Officer McMillion located the snapper and grouper along with bags of ice. Once he moved the bags of ice, he located a gray triggerfish. The captain was issued a citation for possession of gray triggerfish during closed season.

Officer Basford was conducting resource inspections at the Mexico Beach Canal boat ramp when he saw a vessel with five people on board returning from fishing. He conducted a resource inspection of the vessel and found the individuals to be in possession of 14 red snapper; four fish over what they could legally possess. The captain of the vessel took responsibility for the violation and was issued a citation for over the bag limit of red snapper.

Officers Brady, Rice, Alsobrooks and Scott conducted an off-shore patrol in federal waters of the Madison-Swanson. The Madison-Swanson is closed to reef fishing. During their patrol, the officers located several vessels that were actively bottom fishing. The captain of each vessel was issued a federal citation for harvesting reef fish in the closed area. Additionally, during the inspections of the vessels, one vessel was found to be in possession of gray triggerfish. The captain of this vessel was also issued a citation for possession of gray triggerfish during closed season.

Reserve Officer Cooper was conducting resource inspections of vessels returning from fishing in St. Andrews Bay. During an inspection of one vessel, he located a bag containing two fish fillets. The fillets were determined to be from a gag grouper, possibly undersized. The captain of the vessel was issued a citation for failure to land reef fish in whole condition.

Officer Palmer was conducting resource inspections at St. Andrews State Park boat ramp of vessels returning from fishing. During a resource inspection of one vessel, he found the occupants to be in possession of an undersized gag grouper and an undersized red snapper. The captain of the vessel was issued a citation for possession of undersized gag grouper and a warning for possession of undersized red snapper.

Officer Basford and Reserve Officer Cooper responded to a single vessel boating accident in Upper Grand Lagoon on Panama City Beach. During the investigation, the officers noticed that the vessel operator was showing signs of impairment. The operator was put through standardized field sobriety tasks and placed under arrest for BUI. Once back at the Panama City Beach Field Office, the operator provided breath samples of .235 and .239 and was booked into the Bay County Jail for BUI.

Officer Basford and Reserve Officer Cooper conducted a resource inspection of a commercial charter vessel in Grand Lagoon. During the inspection they found five people on board: the captain of the vessel, a deck hand and three paying customers. While inspecting the catch, the officers found two whole gray triggerfish, four gray triggerfish fillets and seven red snapper. One of the red snapper was found to be undersized and with three paying customers they could only possess six red snapper. The captain of the vessel was issued citations for possession of gray triggerfish during closed season and possession of undersized red snapper. He was also issued warnings for failure to land gray triggerfish in whole condition and over the bag limit of red snapper.

CALHOUN COUNTY

Officers Hayes and Baber saw a vessel operating on the Apalachicola River at night without displaying navigational lights. When the vessel came to shore, the officers conducted a boating safety inspection. During the inspection, the officers noticed the operator's speech was slurred and they smelled the odor of an alcoholic beverage. Officer Hayes administered field sobriety tasks on the operator. Based on the results, the operator was placed under arrest for BUI. He refused to provide a breath sample.

Officer Baber was contacted by the Calhoun County Sheriff's Department regarding a call they received from a boater on the Apalachicola River. The caller stated they believed they saw a suspect breaking into a houseboat moored on the river. Officer Baber responded by water and located a suspect on top of one of the houseboats matching the description provided by the caller. He determined the suspect had not broken into the houseboat but was camping on top of it. The suspect was in possession of a .22 caliber rifle and a records check showed that he was a convicted felon. The suspect was cited for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and trespassing.

## ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officers Allgood and Manning conducted offshore saltwater fisheries patrol and issued several notice to appear citations for federal and state violations. The charges include undersized red snapper, undersized gag grouper, possession of trigger fish during a closed season and possession of stone crabs during a closed season.

Officer Allgood performed a fisheries inspection on an individual fishing quota (IFQ) vessel as it returned to the dock in Pensacola to offload their catch. One of the subjects on board had a warrant for driving while his license was suspended. Officer Allgood arrested and transported the subject to the Escambia County Jail.

## FEDERAL WATERS

More than 20 officers participated in targeted enforcement of reef fish violations in Gulf waters south of Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties. Multiple vessels from FWC's Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) program in conjunction with aviation support checked nearly 300 subjects in state and federal waters. The enforcement effort resulted in 17 federal citations, three state citations and 19 resource warnings. Charges included undersized red snapper, undersized cobia, undersized greater amberjack, possession of gray triggerfish during closed season, undersized vermilion snapper and other reef fish species, along with charter fishing without a federal reef fish permit.

## JACKSON COUNTY

Officer Burkhead saw a car stopped in the middle of the road and noticed the brake lights were on but the car never moved. He approached the driver's window and saw the driver slumped over the steering wheel with the car in drive while the driver's foot was on the brake. He woke the driver and put the car in park. The driver showed signs

of impairment. Officer Burkhead administered field sobriety tasks on the driver and arrested him for DUI. He refused to provide a breath sample.

## OKALOOSA COUNTY

Investigator Molnar and Officer Corbin conducted a vessel stop at Crab Island on a personal watercraft (PWC) for a passenger not wearing a PDF. While speaking with the operator, he was showing multiple signs of impairment and the officers detected an odor of cannabis coming from the PWC. The operator admitted to consuming alcohol throughout the day and smoking cannabis about 30 minutes prior to the vessel stop. A search of the PWC revealed approximately five grams of unburnt cannabis. The operator agreed to perform field sobriety tasks. After the tasks, Investigator Molnar arrested the operator for BUI. The operator provided a breath sample of .018 and .020 blood alcohol content which was not consistent with the observations of the officers. The officers requested the operator to submit to a urine sample since drug impairment was suspected and the operator refused. He was booked into the Okaloosa County Jail for BUI with normal faculties impaired and possession of cannabis less than 20 grams. Officer Corbin issued a notice to appear citation to the passenger aboard for possession of cannabis less than 20 grams.

Officers Pifer and Long were on water patrol when they stopped a vessel in violation of the idle speed/no wake zone around Crab Island. The operator did not have identification on board and provided the officers with a name and date of birth. FWC dispatch advised they could not find a record of the individual with the information provided. The subject then provided a different middle initial and date of birth. Dispatch again advised that they could not find a record of the individual. The subject was given a final opportunity to provide his true information. He did and it was determined the subject had active warrants for his arrest in Alabama. The subject was placed under arrest and booked into the Okaloosa County Jail without incident.

Officer Corbin was on patrol when he recognized a subject operating a vehicle who had a suspended driver's license. He confirmed the license was still suspended and conducted a traffic stop. The subject was asked to roll down his rear windows due to the dark tint and he complied. The officer then looked through the back window and saw a handgun laying on the floorboard underneath the driver's seat. The handgun was removed and secured in the patrol vehicle. The serial number for the handgun was run through FWC dispatch, who advised the handgun was reported stolen. The subject and passenger were detained and gave consent for the vehicle to be searched. During the search, two vape pens containing THC oil and a partially smoked cannabis cigarette were located. Post Miranda, the subject admitted to knowing the handgun was stolen. Officer Corbin arrested the subject and charged him with dealing in stolen property, possession of a controlled substance, possession of cannabis less than 20 grams, and knowingly driving with a suspended license.

Officer Corbin was on patrol conducting resource inspections late at night when he saw a vessel with four subjects on board returning to the boat ramp. A resource inspection

was conducted and a total of five redfish were located on the vessel, four of which were undersized. After interviewing everyone onboard, the subjects who caught the redfish were issued notice to appear citations for possession of over the bag limit and possession of undersized redfish.

Officers Corbin and Pifer were on patrol when Officer Corbin saw a derelict sailboat dragging anchor in the channel near a bridge. The officers tied off to the vessel and saw two dogs inside the vessel without food or water. The vessel was hip-towed to a nearby public dock and an attempt was made to locate the owner of the vessel. Animal control was notified and the owner of the vessel was located shortly thereafter. The owner did not have a title to the vessel but did claim ownership of it. The vessel did not have a means of propulsion, any working electrical or bilge, and was barnacle laden. Officer Corbin issued the owner of the vessel a notice to appear citation for derelict vessel stored on state waters and a uniform boating citation for interference with navigation.

Officer Corbin and Investigator Molar were on water patrol at Crab Island when they saw a vessel in violation of the idle speed/no wake zone. A vessel stop was conducted and the operator exhibited signs of impairment. After conducting field sobriety tasks, Officer Corbin placed the subject under arrest for BUI. The operator was cited for operating a vessel while normal faculties impaired and violation of the idle speed/no wake zone. The subject was also assessed a civil penalty for refusing to provide a breath sample.

Officers Bartlett and Pifer were on water patrol at Crab Island when they stopped a vessel for violation of the idle speed/no wake zone. While speaking with the operator of the vessel, signs of impairment were observed and the individual was asked to perform field sobriety tasks. Upon conclusion the operator was placed under arrest for BUI. The subject provided a breath sample of 0.164 and 0.153 blood alcohol content. He was booked into the Okaloosa County Jail and cited for operating a vessel with a blood alcohol content of 0.08 or higher and issued a boating infraction for violation of the idle speed/no wake zone.

Officers Pifer and Bartlett responded to a report of a boating accident with injuries that occurred near the East Jetties in Destin. When the officers arrived on scene they determined that two personal watercraft rented from a nearby livery collided. An occupant on one of the personal watercraft suffered a leg injury and was transported to a local hospital. A follow up at the hospital with the injured party revealed they had suffered a broken leg due to the accident. After conducting the accident investigation, Officer Pifer issued the operator of the striking vessel a citation for violation of navigation rules resulting in an accident.

Several complaints over the past few months have been received regarding human waste being deposited in state waters at a marina. Officer Wilkenson organized a targeted enforcement detail in response to the complaints. The detail focused on inspecting vessels at the marina and ensuring the vessel owners followed marina sanitation laws. The officers working the detail inspected seven vessels and contacted

15 individuals. Two citations and five written warnings were issued for various violations. The officers also educated the marina owners on marine sanitation requirements so they can inform individuals renting wet slips of the regulations to prevent future violations.

## SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Ramos was conducting patrol in a designated shorebird nesting site in Navarre where a colony of black skimmers were nesting. Black skimmers are a species of special concern and one of several imperiled shorebird species in the area. He saw the birds become visibly disturbed and flushed from their hatchlings when a subject ducked under the ropes and entered the closed area. Although the area was roped off and posted with multiple signs, the subject ignored the barricades and went down to the seawall where she began to fish. She was issued a notice to appear citation for the violation.

FWC's dispatch received a Wildlife Alert complaint that various waste materials were disposed of in the Yellow River Wildlife Management Area. The complaint included the license plate for the vehicle and trailer involved. Officer Ramos and Environmental Investigator Hughes located a pile of waste debris on the south side of the management area. Using the tag number in the complaint they located the suspect. During an interview with the suspect he admitted to disposing of the waste materials. Investigator Hughes issued the defendant a criminal citation for disposing of solid waste at a non-permitted location.

## NORTH CENTRAL REGION

### CASES

#### DUVAL COUNTY

Officer Christmas was on patrol in Duval County when he stopped by a creek known for fishing activity. He walked under a bridge and saw a subject attempting to light something on the end of a straw as he puffed it. He walked up behind the subject and identified himself and asked the subject if he was okay. The subject indicated he was fine and was smoking dope. Officer Christmas requested the subject hand him the items he was puffing on, read him his rights per Miranda, and asked the subject what kind of dope he was smoking and the subject said it was ice. Officer Christmas requested the subject walk up to his truck and the subject stopped, reached in to his left pocket and pulled out a clear baggy containing more drugs. He handed it to Officer Christmas and the drugs tested positive as methamphetamine. Officer McGregor responded to assist by taking control of the drugs while Officer Christmas arrested and booked the subject at the Duval County Jail for possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug paraphernalia.

## LEVY COUNTY

Officers worked an enforcement detail in Goethe State Forest during the second special opportunity night time dog-hog hunt. A total of 11 misdemeanor citations were issued, as well as numerous infractions and written warnings. The misdemeanor violations include nine citations for hunting prior to legal hours and two citations for hunting with a gun and light. The gun and light violations consisted of one individual using a spotlight connected to a spare battery in the back of the vehicle and another individual using a vehicle mounted light bar. Lieutenant Umhoefer, Investigator Bembry, and Officers Fox, Starling, Johnston, Hilliard, Willis, Troiano, Stanley, Drew, Ulrich, and Browning assisted during the detail.

## DIXIE COUNTY

Officer Sheffield was conducting fisheries inspections near Shired Island when he saw an individual near the water's edge. Officer Sheffield contacted the person and discovered that the subject was recreationally harvesting oysters. The individual was issued a notice to appear for harvesting oysters from a prohibited area and harvest during closed season.

## CITRUS COUNTY

Officer Nate Cheshire was on patrol in the Citrus Springs area when he saw a vehicle being operated in a manner that led him to believe the operator was impaired. Officer Cheshire followed behind the vehicle and saw the operator was unable to maintain a single lane of travel. Officer Cheshire conducted a traffic stop, saw signs of impairment and requested the operator submit to field sobriety tasks. The driver refused to participate in field sobriety tasks. Officer Cheshire saw a green leafy substance inside the vehicle which the driver identified as synthetic marijuana. The driver was placed under arrest for operating a motor vehicle while impaired. The vehicle was towed at the driver's request.

Officer Crane and Lieutenant Jones were on water patrol in the Kings Bay area of Crystal River. The officers saw a boat operating in excess of the posted manatee idle speed zone. A vessel stop was initiated and during the boarding the operator exhibited signs of impairment. Officer Crane conducted a battery of field sobriety tasks. Based on the tasks, the operator was arrested for operating a vessel while impaired. During the investigation, the officers noticed that a 3-month-old infant was on the boat and was not wearing the required PFD. The subject was transported to the Citrus County Jail where he submitted to a test of his breath. The results of such test revealed that he had a breath alcohol content of .175.

Over the weekend, Citrus County officers worked the 34th Annual Cobia Fishing Tournament on the Homosassa and Crystal Rivers. Officers Browning, Suttles, Crane, Reid and Lieutenant Jones made a total of 12 resource cases. The cases included the following:

- 4 undersized gag grouper cases
- 1 amberjack case
- 2 undersized hog fish cases
- 2 undersized cobia cases
- 3 undersized black drum cases
- 1 undersized red grouper case

## TAYLOR COUNTY

Officers Wilder and Tyler were offshore on patrol targeting illegal fish violations. The officers stopped a vessel that left their anchored spot upon seeing the officers' patrol vessel approaching. A check revealed the occupants on board had harvested numerous undersized red grouper, hogfish, gag grouper, and mangrove snapper with spear guns. The fish, all notably undersized, were seized and donated and the subjects were cited for the violations.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### CLAY COUNTY

FWC officers in Clay County partnered with the Clay County Sheriff's Office Marine Patrol Unit and Chick-Fil-A to reward safe boating practices. Chick-Fil-A graciously donated gift cards good for a free ice cream cone. While on water patrol, officers rewarded children and parents who were wearing life jackets with the free ice cream gift cards. This provided an opportunity for positive encounters between law enforcement and families while on the water while rewarding safe boating practices.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer Cline assisted a private group on the Santa Fe River who were engaged in a river clean up. Approximately 40 members of the group arrived at Hollingsworth boat ramp where they set out for a day of river clean up in a variety of boats. The cleanup was a success with hundreds of pounds of refuse collected up river from the US 47 bridge on the Santa Fe. Officer Cline was thanked for keeping the vessel traffic at a reasonable speed throughout the day.

### DUVAL COUNTY

Investigator Holleman was conducting port investigations. He inspected the Caribbean Cold Storage and requested the bill of lading for some spiny lobster (product of Venezuela) being stored at the facility. He opened two boxes of lobster but did not have time to thaw and check for egg bearing lobster because the storage facility was about to

close. The following day, he and Officer Lentz returned to Caribbean Cold Storage and inspected the lobster. There were 2.5 pallets of lobster. The individual boxes on the pallet were 10 lb. boxes. The bill of lading showed 3,590 pounds of lobster total. Officer Lentz and Investigator Holleman randomly pulled six boxes of lobster and partially thawed each lobster and thoroughly inspected them for eggs. Eleven of 46 female spiny lobster were egg bearing and/or snipped. They seized the 11 egg-bearing/snipped spiny lobster and Investigator Rodriguez is investigating the seafood company in Miami in reference to the violations.

## **NORTHEAST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **PUTNAM COUNTY**

Officer Mason responded to a traffic stop by Putnam County Sheriff's Office where they located a spotlight, rifle, and doe deer in a vehicle at night. The subjects stated that they accidentally hit the deer with their vehicle and used the rifle to put it down. Upon investigating the deer, it was found that the only injury was a bullet entry wound through the shoulder and an exit wound. Both subjects were cited for unlawfully harvesting a doe deer out of season.

#### **BREVARD COUNTY**

While on patrol, Officers Cybula and Delano saw people in the BC49 Critical Wildlife Area (CWA). This area is full of nesting birds this time of year. Due to the imperiled species found here, the area is clearly marked alerting the public that access is prohibited. After speaking with the people, a citation was issued for violation of the CWA.

Lieutenant Lightsey and Officer Cybula participated in a non-jury trial where a man was found guilty of violating the BC49 Critical Wildlife Area. The violator received fines totaling \$371 and must perform twenty hours of community service.

While on patrol of Sebastian Inlet State Park, Officer Dubose saw four men fishing. Once the men began to leave the area, the officer approached to conduct a resource inspection. His inspection revealed one snook that was gutted and missing its head. Snook season is closed in the Atlantic from June 1st to August 31st. A citation was issued for possession of snook out of season.

Officer Matthews conducted surveillance on a group of men fishing at Sebastian Inlet State Park. The group was fishing in an area common for snook violations. After watching the men for some time, they began to pack up to leave. They walked and looked around to see if any officers were in the area and quickly loaded their vehicle. Officer Matthews approached the men who were alerted to his presence. The men reversed their vehicle and threw a bag into a wooded area. After finally getting the

vehicle to stop, Officer Matthews located the bag containing two out of season snook and one over the slot size redfish. Due to the men's history of resource violations and failure to allow inspection, all three men were arrested. Charges included two counts of possession of snook out of season, one count of possession of oversized redfish and one count each for failure to allow inspection by an FWC officer.

## OSCEOLA COUNTY

Officer Summers was on water patrol on West Lake Toho when he approached a vessel to conduct a resource inspection. The officer's inspection revealed four black bass over 16 inches in length. It is illegal to possess more than one black bass over 16 inches per person. A citation was issued for the offense.

Officer Stelzer was on water patrol on West Lake Toho when he saw a man fishing from a vessel. After conducting a resource inspection, the man was found to be in possession of 61 panfish, 11 over the legal daily bag limit. The man was issued a citation for the offense.

Officers Summers and Stelzer were on water patrol on the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes when a pontoon vessel waved them over. The occupants informed the officers that one of their pontoons was taking water and the stern was beginning to list. The officers had the occupants put on their life jackets and assisted them back to the ramp safely.

Officer Stelzer was on water patrol on West Lake Toho when he saw a man in a vessel fishing. A resource inspection revealed the man was in possession of three black bass more than 16 inches in length. It is illegal to possess more than one black bass over 16 inches per person. A citation was issued for the offense.

## INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Officer Dubose was on patrol off Vero Beach when he saw a man diving out of a kayak. A safety and resource inspection was conducted. During the resource inspection, the man retrieved two fish from his kayak. After the officer asked if he had any more fish the subject tipped his kayak up and used his spear gun to retrieve a mutton snapper. A measurement revealed the snapper was 15.25 inches in length, well under the 18-inch minimum. A citation was issued for the offense.

While on patrol in Indian River County, Officer Dubose and Reserve Officer Ricculti conducted resource inspections at a local bridge. One of the subjects was found to have a warrant out of Brevard County for other FWC and weapons charges. The officers placed the man under arrest and delivered him to the Indian River County jail where he awaits extradition to Brevard County.

## MARION COUNTY

Officer Dias received information of a velvet buck that had been taken off Sunnyhill Conservation Area from Forest Road 8. Officer Dias responded to the area to investigate. He located a truck on the side of Forest Road 8 that matched the description of the involved party. After a short surveillance a car pulled up to the truck. Officer Dias contacted a subject at the truck who stated that he and his brother killed a hog on private land earlier that night and he was on his way to dump the gut pile when he ran out of fuel. Officer Dias kept the individual's contact information and got the information on the subject's brother. He also made note of the tire tread on the truck. Officer Dias went to the site where he was informed that the deer had been taken and found the matching tire sign to the suspected truck and very unique boot prints going into Sunnyhill property. He tracked the foot sign into Sunnyhill and saw a buck lying down approximately 100 yards from the end of the foot sign. As he walked toward the buck, it stood up and walked off. When Officer Dias got near where the buck had been lying he located the dead velvet buck that had a bullet wound through the front shoulder. He seized the carcass as evidence and went to the residence of the involved party, where he found boots matching the prints found in Sunnyhill, still damp and sandy from the earlier activities. After a brief interview of the suspect, he admitted to taking the buck from Forest Road 8 and surrendered the rifle used. Officer Dias filed charges with the Marion County State Attorney's Office for taking deer at night with gun and light, shooting from a county roadway, and taking a deer from St. Johns Water Management land.

#### VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officers North and Vanas were on land patrol along Bulow Creek when they stopped to check several males on the creek bank. The subjects were in possession of a bucket containing live blue crabs but no crab fishing gear. They told the officers they had caught the crabs earlier in a different location. The officers saw another male swimming down the creek with a commercial crab trap toward their location. He made it almost to them and dropped the trap when he saw the officers. The man admitted to taking crabs from a commercial trap without permission. The commercial crabber was notified and confirmed that the man did not have his permission to be in possession of the trap. He was cited for theft/molestation of a commercial crab trap.

Lieutenant Eason was on patrol near the St. Johns River within Blue Springs State Park when he saw two adult males and two females enter a red Volkswagen and began to leave the area. Upon leaving, the driver of the vehicle accelerated quickly, spinning his wheels and fish tailing out of the parking area. Lieutenant Eason attempted to conduct a traffic stop to address the violation. While driving eastbound on French Avenue, Lieutenant Eason saw additional track marks where the vehicle drifted severely around a blind curve. As Lieutenant Eason slowed down he saw the vehicle had crashed into the shoulder of the roadway. The four subjects were out of the vehicle, staggering and looking at the damage. Lieutenant Eason activated his emergency lights and contacted the subjects. Officers Thornton and Laroche arrived on scene to assist. The driver was arrested by for reckless driving, driving without a license (never issued), operating an unregistered vehicle, and he was cited for no proof of insurance, tag attached not

assigned, destruction of park property, and a lifetime trespass warning from Blue Springs State Park was issued. Additionally, Officer Thornton completed the crash report. The other male subject was cited for possession of less than twenty grams of cannabis (located in front pocket) by Officer Laroche. The vehicle, which had been traded to the driver for tattoo work that had not been completed or even started, was towed from the scene and assessed as totaled.

While on water patrol in the New Smyrna Beach area, Officer West saw an adult male have great difficulty docking his boat at a local shoreside restaurant. Officer West approached and spoke with the operator and subsequently conducted standardized seated field sobriety tasks. The operator was arrested for boating under the influence (BUI) and transported to the county jail.

## **SOUTHWEST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **HARDEE COUNTY**

While on night patrol, Officers Kobs and Karr spotted a vehicle driving slowly down a county road in east Hardee County. They saw a light being shined out of both side windows of the vehicle. They followed the vehicle for almost an hour as the truck turned onto many roads and shined a variety of private properties. Officer Kobs stopped the vehicle and after being read their Miranda rights, the two people in the truck admitted to shining alongside the road looking for hogs. They both admitted that if they saw a hog, they would have released the two dogs out of the back of their truck. Both men were issued a notice to appear for hunting off the roadway.

#### **HERNANDO COUNTY**

Officers Canamero and Scinta were on water patrol. They conducted a stop of a vessel that had violated a restricted speed zone. While conducting a resource inspection, the subject was found to be in possession of one undersized cobia. The subject was cited accordingly.

#### **HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY**

While on water patrol near the Alafia River, Officers Wilkins and Martinez stopped a vessel to conduct a boating safety inspection. Upon contacting the operator, Officer Wilkins noticed the subject was bracing on items as to not fall, struggling to remember boating safety equipment, and was becoming argumentative. Officer Wilkins conducted field sobriety tasks with the operator and determined the subject was impaired. The subject was arrested for boating under the influence, cited for refusal to submit to test of breath/urine, and booked into the Hillsborough County Jail.

Officer Wilkins was patrolling the Critical Wildlife Areas (CWA) near Port Tampa Bay that are home to numerous species of nesting shorebirds. Officer Wilkins issued one subject a notice to appear for entering a CWA after it was discovered he was camping on one of the islands. The next day Officer Wilkins contacted a charter captain who had passed numerous signs warning of the area being a no entry zone and then anchored in the CWA to fish. Both subjects will have to appear in court for their violations.

While on water patrol near the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, Officer Martinez stopped a vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection and asked the men on board if they had any fish. Officer Martinez was told there was no fish on board but when he started to question about different coolers on the vessel he was told there was one mackerel in a cooler. Upon inspecting the cooler with the mackerel inside, Officer Martinez found an undersized gag grouper. The subject who caught and kept the grouper was cited for violation.

While on water patrol near Little Harbor, Officer Martinez stopped a vessel to conduct a resource and boating safety inspection. While speaking with the operator, Officer Martinez noticed signs of impairment and conducted field sobriety tasks. The operator performed poorly and was arrested for boating under the influence. The subject was booked into the Hillsborough County Jail for boating under the influence and refusal to submit to a test of his breath/urine.

## LEE COUNTY

Officer Furbay was on land patrol when he came across a man near a lake acting nervous and asking questions about fishing. During an inspection, Officer Furbay found a line attached to stake baited with a piece of pork. The man admitted it was his and later gave Officer Furbay permission to look in his vehicle for any fish and wildlife. While looking in the vehicle, the man covered up a sack with a jacket and claimed he did not have anything. Inside the sack was a softshell turtle. The man admitted to catching the turtle and showed Officer Furbay other lines he had set to catch them. The man was issued a misdemeanor citation for catching and keeping a softshell turtle during closed season.

Officer Winton received information about the possible destruction of burrowing owl burrows on a property in Cape Coral. Officer Winton responded to the scene and discovered that six burrows had been destroyed as the result of construction activities. An investigation was conducted and it was determined that the construction manager was aware that the burrows existed, but allowed construction to occur directly next to the burrows anyway. Six felony charges are being filed with the State Attorney's Office.

Officers Hazelwood and Winton were on vessel patrol offshore of Sanibel when they saw a fishing vessel returning from offshore waters. The officers conducted a vessel stop and discovered eight undersized vermilion snapper and two lane snapper not in whole condition. The captain of the vessel was issued a notice to appear for possession of undersized snapper and a warning for possession of reef fish not in whole condition.

## MANATEE COUNTY

Officers Dalton and Gonzales were on water patrol around Long Boat Pass near Jew Fish Key. While on patrol they stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on vessel that was transiting near the key. After the officers stopped the vessel and while going through the boating safety inspection, it appeared that the operator was under influence of alcohol. After an investigation by Officer Gonzales, the operator was arrested and taken to jail for boating under the influence.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

While on land based water patrol, Officer Bibeau saw a vessel return to a nearby boat ramp from offshore and contacted the vessel and the 5 occupants onboard to conduct a fisheries inspection. He located an out of season triggerfish and 12 red snapper. As he was completing his inspection, he located a separate cooler in the back of one occupant's vehicles at the ramp. Officer Bibeau asked for permission to conduct an inspection on the cooler and was permitted to do so. He located an undersized gag grouper in the cooler. Officer Bibeau wrote the operator of the vessel a misdemeanor citation for being over the daily bag limit of red snapper along with a warning for possession of triggerfish during closed season. The other individual was written a misdemeanor citation for possession of undersized gag grouper.

While on land based water patrol, Officer Bibeau contacted two individuals that were actively fishing from a bridge. He conducted a fisheries inspection and located a 14-inch gag grouper. One of the individuals admitted to catching the grouper and was issued a misdemeanor citation for possession of an undersized gag grouper.

While on water patrol, Officers Bibeau and Martinez stopped a vessel that was returning from offshore to conduct a fisheries inspection. Officer Bibeau performed the inspection and located a 14-inch red grouper and a 16-inch gag grouper. Officer Bibeau issued the operator a misdemeanor citation for possession of an undersized red grouper and a warning for the other fisheries violation.

While on land based water patrol, Officer Bibeau saw an offshore fishing vessel return to a nearby boat ramp. He contacted the vessel and the five occupants onboard to conduct a fisheries inspection. Officer Bibeau located 15 red snapper (their bag limit was 10). Officer Bibeau read the occupants their Miranda rights and one of the occupants admitted to taking the extra red snapper. The subject was cited accordingly for over the daily bag limit of red snapper.

While on land patrol in Clearwater, Lieutenant Van Trees saw four individuals fishing from the CSX railroad tracks going over Upper Tampa Bay. Lieutenant Van Trees contacted the subjects as they left the area and conducted a fisheries inspection. He discovered one of the subjects kept an undersized red drum and an undersized black drum. All the subjects were warned for trespassing and the subject with the fish was

issued a notice to appear for possession of undersize red drum and a warning for the black drum violation.

## POLK COUNTY

The Southwest Dive Team was requested by Polk County Sheriff's Office to assist in locating a missing boater they believed had drowned near Lake Scott. Members of the team deployed sector scan sonar on the bottom of the lake in three separate locations. At the third location, the sector scan located an anomaly on the bottom matching the size and shape of the missing individual. The dive team directed Polk County divers to the location in low visibility who confirmed that it was the missing individual. The investigation is ongoing.

## SARASOTA COUNTY

Officers Hudson, Ridgway and Grenz were on water patrol around Little Sarasota Bay. They stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel that was violating a manatee speed zone. After they stopped the vessel, it appeared to the officers that the operator was under influence of alcohol. After an investigation by Officer Hudson, the operator was arrested and taken to jail for boating under the influence.

Officers Hudson, Ridgway and Grenz were on water patrol around Lido Key. They received a complaint that someone on Lido Key Beach was catching and keeping undersized fish and placing them in cooler. The officers located the subject fishing from the beach and conducted a fisheries inspection. During the inspection, the officers discovered the subject had caught and kept one undersized and out of season snook as well as several undersized black drum. The subject also had an outstanding warrant for his arrest and was taken to jail.

## **SOUTH REGION A**

### CASES

## GLADES COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck was on patrol at the Moore Haven locks conducting license and resource inspections. One subject fishing with a rod and reel also had a cast net and a bucket in his possession containing both gamefish and non-game native fish. No violations were found. Officer Brodbeck conducted surveillance on the individual and saw the subject throw dead non-game fish from the bucket back into the water and proceed to throw the cast net. Many fish were captured and the subject dumped them all out on land and went back to fishing with a rod and reel. Officer Brodbeck returned to the location and found many of the same native non-game fish dead on land and the subject was still fishing nearby. When asked about all the dead fish the subject stated that he was keeping them for catfish bait. When asked if he had caught any catfish the

subject replied that he had not. When asked why he had thrown the dead fish from the bucket back into the water, instead of keeping them for catfish bait, the subject did not have an answer. Officer Brodbeck issued the subject a citation for wanton and willful waste of native freshwater fish.

## LEE

Officer Keen was on vessel patrol on the Caloosahatchee River when he noticed a subject operating a personal watercraft (PWC). Officer Keen initiated a vessel stop to conduct a boating safety inspection. During the boating safety inspection, multiple signs of impairment were seen from the operator. The operator agreed to perform seated field sobriety tasks. After the tasks were completed the operator was placed under arrest for boating under the influence (BUI). During an inventory search of the PWC, Officer Keen discovered a small bag containing a white powdery substance which would later field test positive for cocaine. At the Lee County Jail two hours after arrest, the operator provided a breath sample of 0.137. The operator of the vessel was issued a criminal boating citation for BUI and possession of cocaine.

## MARTIN COUNTY

While conducting water patrol, Officers Morrow and Pecko saw a vessel with improper navigation lights. They followed the vessel and it made a sharp turn to port in the direction of the mangroves and shallow waters. The officers conducted a vessel stop to address the violation and to check on the welfare of the occupants. Officer Morrow saw that the vessel operator had glassy, red eyes and was using fixed objects in his vessel for stability. After conducting field sobriety tasks on the operator, he was determined to be impaired and was placed under arrest for boating under the influence.

While conducting water patrol, Officers Morrow and Pecko responded as back-up to Officers McLeod and Boyd to a vessel passenger that had become belligerent and uncooperative during a vessel stop. Upon arrival, the subject who was hindering the initiating officer's ability to complete his investigation was placed under arrest after continually refusing to comply with lawful orders. The subject was transported to the Martin County Jail where he was booked on charges of disorderly Intoxication, interference with an FWC Officer, and resisting arrest without violence.

Officers Rogers, Moss and Schroer were on federal fisheries patrol, 12 miles offshore near the Oculina Banks. Throughout the day, the officers made multiple vessel stops and conducted fisheries inspections. The officers stopped two center console fishing vessels and a commercial king fish vessel, all of which had multiple violations. The officers found both vessels to be in possession of multiple bottom fish. One of the vessels was using vermilion snapper as cut bait and had a hidden undersized mahi in a front floor hatch. The other vessel had multiple red snapper in a floor hatch of the vessel. The commercial vessel had multiple king fish with no ice. All violations were handled accordingly and the officers issued a total of four federal citations and multiple boating safety gear warnings.

Officers Boyd and McLeod were on water patrol a mile offshore of the St. Lucie Inlet. They stopped a vessel to perform a fisheries inspection and found the captain was in violation of the daily bag limit for vermilion snapper. The captain had 11 vermilion snapper over the daily bag limit of five per person. He also did not have his registration aboard his vessel. The captain was issued a notice to appear (citation) for the misdemeanor violation of possessing over the bag limit for vermilion snapper and a warning for not having the vessel registration on board.

While on patrol of Jonathan Dickinson State Park, Officer Norbrothen was dispatched to the report of a man acting erratically and violently in the area of the concession stand pavilions. When the officer arrived, he saw a man in distress walking around the area disturbing visitors. Park staff said the man had grabbed them and they were actively attempting to keep the man away from visitors. An investigation by officers on scene concluded that the man had ingested drugs and needed medical evaluation. The man was transported to a local hospital and was later cited for disorderly conduct.

#### OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Officer Hausler was on water patrol performing boating safety inspections in Taylor Creek when he saw a subject with slurred speech and fumbling with safety gear. The subject claimed to have been drinking and was also on prescription medication. After performing standardized seated field sobriety tasks, the subject was placed under arrest for boating under the influence and booked into the Okeechobee County Jail.

Officer Davis conducted a resource inspection on a subject fishing around the S84 Water Control Structure. Upon checking the subject's identification through the FWC communication center, it was found that the subject had an active warrant out of Dixie County. The subject was placed under arrest and booked into the Highlands County Jail.

#### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Boyd and McLeod were on patrol and received a call about subjects hiding snook in the rocks near the Palm Beach Inlet during the snook closed season. They conducted surveillance of the beach and saw the subjects walking back to their vehicles. When the officers inspected their property for contraband, they found a 35-inch snook in one of the subject's possession. The legal slot for snook is 28-32 inches. The subject in possession of the snook was issued a notice to appear (citation) for two charges: possession of snook out of season and possession of oversized snook. The subject was also issued two warnings for no shoreline saltwater license and possessing a snook with no snook permit.

#### ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Officers Payne and Arnold were watching people fish at a spillway in Fort Pierce when they saw a subject place an undersized snook in the rocks. The subject went to a nearby truck and got a bucket and returned to the area. He went by a tree, lifted a palm limb and removed 3 undersized snook, placing them in the bucket. He went to some rocks and removed and placed a fourth snook in the bucket. When the subject returned to the truck, Officer Arnold started down the road to contact the vehicle. Upon making contact, no bucket or fish were discovered in the truck. After searching the area for a few minutes, Officer Payne, who had now arrived on scene, located the subject observed earlier hiding along a canal bank in tall grass. When asked where the bucket and fish were, the subject stated that he was not fishing despite fish scales and slime on his shirt. A further search of the area located the bucket containing 4 undersized snook in a nearby dumpster. The subject was placed under arrest for possession of snook out of season, possession of undersized snook, over the bag limit of snook and transported to St. Lucie County Jail.

Officer Payne was watching a spillway in Fort Pierce when a subject caught a snook. A different subject fishing there took the snook and put it in a bucket and began to leave the spillway. Officer Shermetaro located the subject with the bucket and snook, which was undersized. The subject was cited for possession of undersized snook and possession of snook out of season. A records check of the subject revealed that he had been cited for the same violation before.

Officer Arnold responded to a spillway in Fort Pierce about a subject in possession of a snook. Upon his arrival, Officer Arnold saw a single person fishing. After contacting the only individual there, the subject stated that he had no fish, however a snook was discovered on a stringer nearby. The subject was cited for possession of undersized snook and possession of snook out of season.

## MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Lieutenant Hankinson responded to an apartment complex with an eight-foot alligator attempting to enter a screened enclosure. He caught the alligator before it did more damage to the resident's porch and AC unit. The alligator was safely removed without further incident and turned over to a state licensed trapper.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### GLADES COUNTY

Officers Davis, Padgett, Dial and Fijalkowski were dispatched to a disabled vessel occupied by 2 adults and 3 small children on the Lake Okeechobee marsh. The weather was deteriorating quickly due to an approaching lightning storm and there was no place for the family to safely retreat. Officers Davis and Padgett located the vessel by airboat while Officers Dial and Fijalkowski responded by mud boat to assist with transporting

the occupants to safety. All occupants of the vessel were safely transported to Indian Prairie Canal Boat Ramp in Glades county.

## **PALM BEACH COUNTY**

Lieutenant Hankinson was patrolling near the Lake Worth Avenue Bridge when a person approached him and advised of a female subject threatening to commit suicide. He located the subject on a fishing pier adjacent to the bridge. As he began to approach the subject she placed a garbage bag over her head and jumped into the Intracoastal Waterway. As he prepared for a water rescue, the subject surfaced and removed the bag from her face. Lieutenant Hankinson along with responding deputies and fire rescue safely intercepted the swimming subject. She was rescued and brought to land without further harm or incident. Fire rescue transported the subject for medical assistance and evaluation.

## **SOUTH REGION B**

### **CASES**

#### **MIAMI DADE COUNTY**

While on water patrol, Officers Moschiano and Blanco conducted a resource inspection on a vessel about a mile east of the Biscayne Channel. Upon inspection of the vessel, the subject was found to be in possession of three undersized mahi and was missing a type 4 PFD, current flares, a fire extinguisher and the registration to the vessel. The subject was cited accordingly.

While on water patrol near Deering Bay channel, Officers Moschiano and Blanco conducted a resource inspection on a vessel near the mangroves. Upon inspection of the vessel the officers found the subjects in possession of 15 undersized mangrove/gray snapper and 9 over the bag limit mangrove/gray snapper. Appropriate enforcement action was taken.

The Fearless crew consisting of Lieutenants Kaloostian and Yanez and Officer Delgado departed Miami for a multiday patrol. During the patrol, the crew wrote citations for many commercial fishery, recreational fishing and charter vessel violations. Violations included possession of seventeen undersized mangrove snapper, twenty-five undersized lane snapper, possession of four undersized mahi, over the bag limit of red snapper, twenty undersized yellowtail snapper and yellowtail snapper not in whole condition. They also cited possession of eighteen undersized lane snapper. They also stopped a charter vessel fishing in North Ecological Reserve in possession of red grouper, five mangrove snapper, two mutton snapper, two hogfish and one undersized black grouper. Appropriate enforcement action was taken for the violations.

#### **MONROE COUNTY**

Officers Richards, Foell, Sutter and Trueblood onboard FWC offshore patrol vessel Trident conducted a directed night-patrol focusing on the mutton snapper spawn. The officers patrolled outside the reef line from Marathon to Key West and saw many vessels fishing the popular spawn locations. Throughout the night eight recreational and commercial vessels targeting mutton snapper were inspected. One recreational vessel leaving Western Dry Rocks was inspected with three male subjects onboard. When asked how many mutton snapper were onboard the operator stated 15. A total of 18 mutton snapper were found onboard the vessel. The operator was cited accordingly for the bag limit violation.

Officer Maldonado conducted a vessel resource check on a boat with three persons on board. The occupants were fishing inside the Carysfort Reef Sanctuary Protection Area (SPA) in North Key Largo. Officer Maldonado saw a bucket with four speared hogfish. All four hogfish measured less than 16 inches in length. The bucket also contained five undersized yellowtail snapper measuring less than 12 inches in length, two undersized schoolmaster snapper measuring less than 10 inches in length, and one undersized mangrove snapper measuring less than 10 inches in length. All the hogfish were caught using a spear gun. Appropriate enforcement action was taken.

Officers Wagner, Rubenstein, and Piekenbrock were working a targeted enforcement action offshore of Cudjoe Key. The officers conducted an inspection of vessels leaving the weed lines in 250 feet of water where many small mahi were being caught. The officers found a vessel to be in possession of 9 undersize mahi. The individuals stated they lost count of how many they had and didn't measure any of them. Officers issued 3 misdemeanors and a warning for vessels taking undersized dolphin.

Officer Petru was on water patrol near Whale Harbor Channel on the bayside when he saw a USCG vessel which had a boat stopped with numerous people on board. Officer Petru stopped as routine backup and the Coast Guard boarding officer told him the operator had a warrant out of Georgia. FWC dispatch found that he also had a warrant out of Florida as well for failure to pay child support. The man was placed under arrest for the outstanding warrants.

## COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Kleis recognized a subject in a public area as having an active felony warrant with FWC. The warrant was issued because of a previous resource violation investigation conducted by Investigator White. Officer Kleis, along with Officers Yurewitch and Thurkettle waited for the subject to return to his vehicle in the parking lot. Officer Kleis approached the subject and explained to him that he had a warrant. The subject was placed under arrest and transported to the Collier County Jail.

Officer Plussa was conducting overnight foot patrol on Naples Beach when he saw two subjects carelessly shining bright flashlights and taking selfies. The subjects were near a posted sea turtle nesting location. Both subjects were shown the posted ordinance

sign. The ordinance prohibits lights on the beach during the current nesting season. Officer Plussa explained the negative effects artificial light can have on both nesting sea turtles and hatchlings. Both subjects were issued the appropriate warnings.

The Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission jointly seized 11 shark fins and dismembered sharks aboard a 40-foot commercial fishing vessel near South Sound Creek. A Station Islamorada Special Purpose Craft- Law Enforcement crew with an FWC officer aboard located the boat off South Sound Creek with improper display of navigation lights. Through the course of the boarding, the boarding team discovered 11 shark fins and dismembered sharks aboard the boat Miss Shell. The boat was escorted to Port Largo and the catch was seized.

## MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

### COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Kleis, Yurewitch, and Tidwell responded to a complaint of a bear in a Naples apartment complex. Upon arrival, the officers discovered the bear lying down on one of the building staircases. Due to the bear's location, several residents were unable to enter or exit their apartments. A crowd began to congregate, and due to the size of the crowd and proximity of the bear, Collier County deputies were called to assist. Once the crowd was moved to a safe location Officer Kleis hazed the bear away from the building with his bear aversion shotgun and beanbag rounds.

Officer Plussa and Collier County Sheriff's Deputies responded to multiple calls reporting a wildlife trapping company trespassing on private property in a residential neighborhood. The callers reported firearms being discharged to kill muscovy ducks. The trappers were found to be using air-powered pellet guns that are used to move the ducks out of an area. The trappers had been misinformed about the boundaries of the contract they were working. Officer Plussa reviewed nuisance wildlife regulations with the trappers and educated them on private property boundaries. Several trespass warnings were issued at the request of homeowners.

Investigator Alford, Officer Polly and Officer Araujo inspected two captive wildlife facilities in response to caging complaints from a concerned citizen. The nature of the complaint was regarding the shelter of the Bengal tigers and the Florida panther. After the inspection, the cages were found to have adequate shelter that exceeded the state law requirements. The citizen was notified of the facility's compliance.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### MONROE COUNTY

Officer Dube and his son attended the Everglades Youth Conservation Camp at the JB Corbett Wildlife Management area in Palm Beach County. The week-long summer

camp has numerous programs that include a subject safety course, fresh and saltwater fishing, paddle sports, archery and equestrian activities. The Everglades Camp also teaches the young campers about conservation goals and initiatives while being a steward of our environment.