

FWC

Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report



July 20, 2018 through July 26, 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

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Officer Travis was on patrol near the Ten Foot Hole Boat Ramp in Apalachicola. He saw a vessel returning to the boat basin and conducted a resource inspection. During the inspection he discovered two undersized trigger fish and an undersized king mackerel. The owner was cited for possession of trigger fish during closed season and issued a warning for possession of undersized king mackerel.

Officer Kossey was on patrol near the Ten Foot Hole Boat Ramp in Apalachicola. He saw a vessel returning to the boat basin and conducted a resource inspection. During the inspection he discovered three undersized gag grouper and four out of season red snapper. The owner was cited for possession of undersized gag grouper and possession of red snapper during closed season.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers Pifer and Corbin were on vessel patrol when they saw a personal watercraft (PWC) violating the idle speed/no wake zone around the south side of Crab Island traveling towards the east side. A vessel stop was initiated to address the violation. During the stop, Officer Pifer saw signs of impairment and administered standardized field sobriety tasks. Based on observations of the vessel in motion, personal contact with the operator, and the operator's performance of the tasks, Officer Pifer placed the operator under arrest for BUI. The operator agreed to provide a breath sample and the

results were 0.104 blood alcohol content and 0.103 blood alcohol content. The individual was transported to the Okaloosa County Jail.

Officer Corbin was on vessel patrol with U.S. Coast Guard personnel in the Destin Harbor. The officers saw a pontoon boat cut off another vessel in violation of inland navigational rule. A vessel stop was conducted to address the violation. Officer Corbin saw 11 adults and one youth on board. The boating safety inspection revealed that the vessel had insufficient number of life jackets on board. Officer Corbin determined the vessel was rented. The officer addressed the life jacket violation with the livery personnel. The livery individual who provided the safety equipment was issued a notice to appear citation.

Officer Corbin was on vessel patrol with an Okaloosa County sheriff's deputy and responded for assistance on a vessel stop conducted by another sheriff's deputy. When they arrived, Officer Corbin became the lead officer. The deputy who made the initial stop advised Officer Corbin that he saw indicators of impairment from the operator. Officer Corbin contacted the operator and saw the operator's eyes were bloodshot and watery and his face was flushed. The operator admitted consuming an alcoholic beverage. The operator voluntarily performed field sobriety tasks (FST). The operator had indicators of impairment from the FST performed. The operator was arrested for BUI. The operator refused to provide a breath sample and was transported to the Okaloosa County Jail.

Officers Pifer and Brooks were on vessel patrol conducting boating safety and resource protection in the Destin Pass. The officers received a complaint of a hit and run boating accident that occurred in the Destin Pass near Norriego Point. Reports were received that a personal watercraft struck a 13-ft Boston Whaler. The operator of the struck boat was able to get the PWC's vessel registration, took a photograph of the PWC and operator and provided the name of a witness from the shore. The officers met with the operator of the struck vessel, and with the information provided determined the PWC was rented from a local livery located in the Destin Harbor. The officers arrived at the livery to find the operator had returned the PWC and left the area. The livery contacted the operator and he returned to the livery. The PWC operator continued to deny that he struck the victim's boat. Based on the officers' investigation, the PWC operator was issued a notice to appear citation for leaving the scene without providing personal contact information and failure to notify a law enforcement agency immediately of the accident.

Officers Corbin and Pifer were on vessel patrol conducting boating safety inspections in the Crab Island area of Destin. The officers saw a 24-ft vessel in violation of the idle speed/no wake zone traveling south toward the Destin Bridge. The vessel cut off two other vessels in violation of navigational rules, coming within approximately 30 feet of hitting one of the vessels. A vessel stop was conducted to address the multiple violations. During the boating safety inspection, Officer Corbin saw many indicators of impairment from the operator. The operator agreed to perform field sobriety tasks (FST). The FST performed by the operator indicated impairment. Based on

observations of the vessel in motion, personal contact with the operator, and the operator's performance of the tasks, Officer Corbin placed the operator under arrest for BUI. The operator refused to provide a breath sample and was transported to the Okaloosa County Jail.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Officer Anderson received a call from dispatch regarding an individual who was broken down on Lake Miccosukee. Officer Anderson contacted the individual who advised that his boat motor had stopped working and that due to the severe thunderstorm, his boat was filling up with water. Officer Anderson advised him to put a life jacket on and paddle as close to shore as possible. Officer Anderson, with the assistance of a Good Samaritan, headed out to find the distressed boater. After locating the boater, it became apparent that he was stuck between two large floating tussocks and they could not get to him. Deputies from the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office arrived in their vessel and were able to get a rope to the individual and pull him out.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

SEARCH AND RESCUE

GILCHRIST COUNTY

Officer Johnston was on water patrol at the Santa Fe River when he was flagged down by a concerned citizen who stated he saw a female subject passed out in a kayak near Ginnie Springs. Officer Johnston quickly responded and located the subject sitting in her kayak, completely incapacitated, and floating down the Santa Fe River. Through emergency lights flashing and lots of shouting, Officer Johnston was able to wake the subject and get a verbal response. The female subject was not wearing a life jacket and could not produce any required safety gear. Officer Johnston could see an empty bottle of wine in plain view sitting between the subject's feet. The subject refused to perform field sobriety exercises and eventually became verbally aggressive towards Officer Johnston and deputies who arrived to assist with transportation. At the jail, the subject continued her verbal aggression towards Officer Johnston and jail staff while adamantly refusing to provide a breath sample. She was booked into jail for BUI. The subject was issued non-criminal citations for insufficient safety gear and refusal to provide a breath sample (first offense).

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROL

GILCHRIST/ALACHUA COUNTY

Officers Johnston and Cline provided ground support during a marijuana eradication flight with members of the North Florida HIDTA Task Force. The officers and task force members received information from FWC Officer Troiano regarding an outdoor grow operation in a rural area at the Gilchrist/Alachua County line. With assistance from spotters in an aircraft, Officers Johnston and Cline were able to successfully locate and eradicate roughly 28 marijuana plants from the location.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Mason conducted a crab trap inspection on a commercial subject in Salt Run and Lake George and saw several gear violations, as well as not having the current years tags attached. The subject was issued a warning for not having the tags attached and was issued a citation for the gear violations.

BREVARD COUNTY

While on late night patrol at Sebastian Inlet State Park, Officer Matthews saw two men fishing in an area where snook are commonly caught. After conducting a resource inspection with the two men, one snook was discovered. A citation was issued for consumption of alcohol in a state park and possession of snook out of season.

Officer Balgo made several cases at area causeways. These causeways are heavily fished at night. One case involved shrimping with too many traps, and the other was for possession of whole stone crab. Citations were issued for the violations.

While on water patrol near Ski Island, Officers Balgo and Delano saw a vessel bearing no registration numbers. During the stop, Officer Delano saw signs of impairment from the operator. Seated field sobriety exercises revealed that the operator's normal faculties were impaired. He was arrested for boating under the influence (BUI) and transported to the Brevard County Jail.

While on offshore patrol out of Port Canaveral, Officers Balgo, Hallsten, and Delano saw a vessel with fishing poles and conducted a resource inspection. An undersized cobia was discovered, and a citation issued.

While at Freddy Patrick boat ramp at Port Canaveral, Officer Delano conducted a resource inspection on a vessel coming in from offshore. The inspection yielded four undersized mahi. A citation was issued for the undersized mahi.

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Officers Kearney and Matthews were on vessel patrol in Indian River County when they conducted a vessel safety inspection on a vessel containing multiple occupants. During the inspection the operator showed several signs of impairment. After speaking with the operator and his participation in standardized field sobriety tasks, he was placed under arrest for boating under the influence. The operator refused to provide a sample of his breath and was booked into the Indian River County Jail.

Lieutenant Lightsey was on patrol on the Upper St. Johns River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when he saw three airboats in a restricted area. After speaking with the operators, the men admitted to knowing the clearly marked area was restricted and that they had run over the existing large buoy line. All three airboat operators received citations for operating a vessel in a restricted area.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

BREVARD COUNTY

Officer Luce responded to a vessel that had overturned in the Indian River south of the Max Brewer Causeway in Titusville during a violent storm. There were four people in the water and eight people from the group were stranded on a nearby spoil island. As Officer Luce approached the capsized vessel, a wall of heavy rain reduced his visibility to 50 yards. Officer Luce confirmed that everyone was accounted for and got the four people in the water onto his patrol boat. He transported an elderly man with a tracheotomy and a husband and wife with their 4-year-old child to Parrish Park boat ramp where EMS was standing by. Titusville officers removed the remaining stranded people from the island using a fire/rescue boat. No medical attention was needed beyond first aid.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer Bertolami and Lieutenant Yetter were dispatched to assist three young adults, a male and two females, who had become disoriented and were unable to find their way from the backwater area of a portion of the Mosquito Lagoon. Just before sundown, the Volusia County Sheriff's Office helicopter was able to locate them. All three were safely brought back to a residential area where they were able to return to their vehicle.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

HERNANDO COUNTY

Officers Canamero and Little were on water patrol and conducted a vessel stop for a resource inspection. The vessel operator stated they had fish on board and the

inspection revealed an oversized redfish and undersized spotted seatrout. Resource citations were issued accordingly.

Officer Canamero responded to a complaint regarding work being performed on land with active gopher tortoise burrows. He was able to locate two burrows that had been recently crushed. After further investigation, he was able to identify and locate the subject responsible for the damage and determined that there were no permits issued for the location. The subject was charged accordingly.

LEE COUNTY

Officer Winton conducted a livery inspection at a jet ski rental company on Fort Myers Beach. During the inspection, he determined that several of the rental vessels were not outfitted with the required safety gear, which the company had been cited for several months prior. The manager of the livery was issued a notice to appear for the violation, and a warning for improper display of a registration decal.

Officer Winton was on patrol in Bonita Springs when he saw two subjects fishing from a bridge. A fisheries inspection was conducted, and it was determined that the subjects were in possession of three undersized pompano. Both subjects were issued notices to appear for the violation.

Officer Winton was on patrol at Lover's Key State Park when he saw several subjects wade fishing with cast nets and placing fish in buckets. He conducted surveillance and a fisheries inspection when the subjects returned to their vehicle. Upon inspection, it was determined that the subjects were in possession of two undersized redfish and two undersized sheepshead. Additionally, only one of the five subjects had a valid fishing license. The two subjects that were in possession of the undersized fish were issued notices to appear, and the four subjects without licenses were issued citations for fishing without a license.

Officer Winton was on water patrol in Estero Bay when he stopped a vessel. During a fisheries inspection it was determined that the operator was in possession of an undersized and out of season snook, over the bag limit of mangrove snapper, and four undersized mangrove snapper. The subject was written a notice to appear for the snook violations and the undersized mangrove snapper, and warnings for over the bag limit of mangrove snapper and possessing snook without a valid snook permit.

Officers Hazelwood and Thompson, wearing plain clothes and carrying fishing gear, were patrolling a local fishing spot at night. Uniformed patrol officers Stapleton and Lieutenant Barrett were stationed nearby to initiate contact with anyone suspected of harvesting illegal fish. After most of the subjects left the area, a group of six men started using a cast net along a section of beach known to contain many snook. The men caught a snook and put it in a bucket and began heading back to their cars. The uniformed officers were called in and the men were found to have harvested an undersized snook, out of season, by an unlawful method. Further inspection revealed

another undersized snook and three undersized sheepshead. Appropriate charges were filed.

MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Davidson, working with the U.S. Coast Guard, were on water patrol in the area of the Cortez Bridge when they stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel just north of the bridge. U.S. Coast Guard crew noticed that the operator of the vessel seemed to be under the influence of alcohol, so they called Officer Davidson over to investigate and determine the level of impairment. Upon completion of his investigation, Officer Davidson placed the captain of the vessel under arrest for boating under the influence of alcohol and he was taken to the Manatee County Jail.

Officer Davidson was on water patrol near Long Boat Pass when he stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel transiting around Jew Fish Key. Officer Davidson could smell alcohol coming from the captain of the vessel and he was also having trouble with his speech. Officer Davidson investigated to determine the level of impairment. Upon completing his investigation, Officer Davidson placed the captain of the vessel under arrest for boating under the influence of alcohol and he was taken to the Manatee County Jail.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer Bibeau saw two individuals actively wade fishing. He watched the individuals for approximately 30 minutes from a concealed location and saw the subjects catch their legal bag limit of redfish and continue to fish. One of the individuals caught a second redfish, putting him over the legal daily bag limit. The subjects attempted to make a quick getaway. Officer Bibeau managed to catch up to their vehicle as they were leaving the area and conducted a traffic stop. During the traffic stop, Officer Bibeau located three redfish. One of the individuals was issued a misdemeanor citation for harvesting over the daily bag limit of redfish and the third redfish was released alive.

While on patrol, Officer Bibeau saw an individual actively fishing from underneath a bridge. He contacted the individual to conduct a fisheries inspection and located an out-of-season and undersized snook. Officer Bibeau wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for possession of an out-of-season snook and two warnings for possession of an undersized snook and not obtaining a valid snook permit.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Boyd and Schroer were on water patrol in Lake Worth when they received a call about two subjects catching and keeping undersized fish at the Boynton Inlet. When they arrived, they found two subjects that matched the description of the alleged violators. The two subjects were found to be in possession of ten undersized mangrove snapper, one undersized schoolmaster snapper, and one undersized lane snapper. The subjects also did not have their fishing licenses. The two subjects were cited for their violations.

Officers Moss, Rogers and Carroll deployed to Key West for an offshore special detail. The detail consisted of commercial shrimp boat inspections to measure the turtle exclusion devices "TEDs" and pre-lobster season patrol. They conducted inspections on numerous vessels. As they were traveling back to the dock they encountered a subject on a small (dingy) boat that had no navigational lights. The vessel veered in front of the patrol boat dangerously close. The officers attempted to stop the vessel, but it remained underway, ignoring the lights and siren. The vessel finally stopped and the officers noticed the smell of alcohol coming from the subject. He was found to be intoxicated and was placed under arrest. The subject lied about his identity. The officers later found out that he had a felony warrant for battery and a warrant for boating under the influence.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck was on vessel patrol in the Jupiter Inlet and saw two kayaks with a total of 5 individuals overturn in the inlet with a strong incoming tide. The current quickly separated the subjects in the water from the kayaks. He responded and instructed all subjects to stop attempting to swim against the current. Officer Brodbeck pulled the individuals from the water one by one and, with the assistance of nearby boaters, both kayaks and personal belongings were recovered and brought to shore. Officer Brodbeck spoke with the individuals as well as the kayak rental company about the importance of life jackets and being aware of hazards on the water.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officer Padilla was on water patrol and conducted a livery safety inspection resulting from a jet ski that had the registration decal improperly displayed. After speaking with the operator, he discovered the livery did not provide adequate pre-ride instructions and was conducting business at a county boat ramp. The livery operator was issued criminal citations for the violations and Miami-Dade County cited the livery operator for the business violation.

Officer Padilla was on land patrol around Morningside Park within Miami Dade County. Before entering the park, he noticed a man actively fishing with rod and reel along the seawall a short distance from the main street. He parked his patrol vehicle and began to approach the man. When the subject realized the officer was approaching, he quickly reached into a dark colored tub, retrieved a bonnethead shark, and threw it back into the water. Officer Padilla yelled loud verbal commands to stop what he was doing and move away from the tub. Officer Padilla discovered another bonnethead shark. The subject was issued a criminal citation for interfering/obstructing an FWC Officer. The subject was also cited for not have a fishing license in his possession.

Officers Sarmiento and Gomez were on water patrol when they saw a vessel heading west coming out of Cesar's Creek with fishing rods displayed. They stopped the vessel to perform a fishery inspection. The three subjects were in possession of two undersized African pompano and one undersized mutton snapper. Citations were issued for the violations.

Officers Perez and Sample assisted a woman and two children on a broken-down jet ski. The individuals had rented the jet ski from a nearby livery and did not receive proper safety instruction. Upon inspection, Officers Perez and Sample found the livery in violation of three safety regulations. The owner of the livery had previous violations with FWC and had a court order in place. The owner was cited for three misdemeanors, was arrested, transported, and booked into Turner Guilford Knight Jail.

Officers Perez and Sample were on water patrol when saw a boat anchored in Cape Florida Channel with multiple fishing rods on board, and three occupants actively fishing with rod and reel. They initiated a stop on the vessel and conducted a fisheries inspection. Their inspection revealed four mutton snapper that were under the minimum size limit of 18 inches total length. The owner of the vessel was cited for possession of undersized mutton snapper.

Officer Dominguez was on water patrol around the Key Biscayne Special Management Zone. A fisheries inspection conducted on a vessel revealed two undersized hogfish and an undersized mutton snapper. All three fish were harvested using spear guns. Appropriate citations were issued for the violation.

Officer Cartaya was on patrol at Matheson Hammock. He approached a vessel at the boat ramp occupied by two people. After conducting a fisheries inspection, four undersized yellow tail snapper and one undersized mutton snapper were found. Citations were issued for the violations.

Officers Carper, Cosculluela and Sample were on water patrol and saw a vessel running on plane inside a posted manatee zone. They initiated a stop on the vessel and saw four individuals on the boat with dive and lobster gear on board. A fisheries inspection revealed that one subject was in possession of two spiny lobster under the

legal minimum size of 3 inches carapace length, and two hogfish under the minimum size limit of 16 inches fork length. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officers Carper, Cosculluela and Sample received a call from United States Coast Guard officers about a vessel operator who ran his boat into the dock at Crandon Park Boat Ramp. Officer Sample conducted a boating safety inspection and saw signs of impairment from the subject. He asked the subject to perform standardized field sobriety tasks, to which he agreed. After determining the subject's normal faculties were impaired, he was arrested and transported to Turner Guilford Knight Jail.

Officers Sample and Cosculluela were on water patrol at night near the Rickenbacker Causeway. They saw an individual fishing from the concrete pillar underneath the bridge. They approached the subject to conduct a fishery inspection. The subject stated that he had some fish in a small blue cooler and pulled out two blue runners, a grunt, and a porgy. When asked if he had any more fish, he was reluctant to open the cooler again. Upon further inspection, the officers found five undersized mangrove snapper, one undersized mutton snapper, and two undersized gray triggerfish buried underneath the ice. The appropriate citations were issued.

Officers Cosculluela and Sample were on water patrol near Cape Florida State Park. They saw multiple subjects exit the water with lobster gear and board a vessel, then proceeded to leave the area. They initiated a stop on the vessel and saw numerous people on board with dive gear and lobster gear. They conducted a resource inspection and discovered five spiny lobster under the legal minimum size limit of 3 inches carapace length. The subjects were cited accordingly.

Officer Negrón was conducting a lobster inspection at Bayfront Park Boat Ramp, within Miami Dade County. He saw a vessel bearing Florida registration with several people on board, pulling into the boat slip. He met with the vessel's captain and a fisheries inspection revealed that the subject was in possession of egg-bearing female spiny lobster. The subject was issued a citation for the unlawful possession of egg-bearing lobster.

Officers Saavedra and Dominguez were on water patrol near Bear Cut when they stopped a vessel that was returning from a fishing trip. The four people on board were in possession of twenty-one mahi, fourteen of which were undersized. The captain of the vessel was cited for the violation. During a subsequent vessel stop near Haulover Inlet, the same officers discovered a subject to be in possession of two undersized mutton snapper. That subject was cited for the undersized violation.

Officer Blanco and Lieutenant Reynaud were on water patrol in the Biscayne Channel of Miami-Dade County. They saw a vessel operating with a dive flag displayed while not actively diving or having anyone in the water. During the stop, Lieutenant Reynaud noticed a small device made up of a short steel rod with a large hook attached, commonly used for taking lobsters illegally. Officer Blanco verified the presence of lobsters aboard and found 14 lobsters with clearly visible damage to the body and

puncture wounds consistent with the illegal method of taking. The subject stated he had used the apparatus on some lobsters. Lieutenant Reynaud asked if there were any more lobsters on board and the subject said there were hidden lobsters in the vessel. The subject pulled two buoyancy control devices used for diving and stated he had wrung tails inside the devices. A total of 18 wrung tails were discovered. The subject and two other license holders were 15 lobsters over the bag limit, with 6 of the wrung lobster tails were undersized. Appropriate citations were issued.

Officers Perez and Moschiano were on water patrol near Cape Florida channel when they saw a few men diving near a sea wall. They stopped and conducted a resource inspection. Upon inspection the subjects were found to be in possession of 16 undersized lobster and were cited accordingly.

Officers Perez and Moschiano were on water patrol near Cape Florida channel when they responded to a tip from Officer Washington about a vessel displaying a dive flag in the Biscayne Bay Lobster Sanctuary. Upon inspection, three men on the vessel were in possession of 33 lobster in the sanctuary, 11 of which were undersized. The men were cited accordingly.

Officer McKinley was on water patrol for mini-season in Biscayne Bay when he approached a vessel with individuals in the water. He saw three rung lobster tails fall out of the shorts of one the persons on board. A fishery inspection revealed the individuals to be in possession of twenty-two whole lobster, of which thirteen were undersized. They were also in possession of one whole stone crab. They were cited accordingly for these violations.

MONROE COUNTY

Lieutenant Munkelt and Officer Sapp were conducting water patrol offshore of Summerland Key. Officer Sapp received a call from FWC dispatch regarding a sailboat that was going in circles with an unconscious person onboard. Lieutenant Munkelt and Officer Sapp located the vessel approximately two miles south of Little Palm Island. The vessel was under power from a small outboard engine and going in circles to the starboard side. Officer Sapp tried to wake the subject, who was laying on the stern of the vessel, utilizing the emergency siren, but the subject was unresponsive. Officer Sapp boarded the vessel and saw two bottles of partially consumed alcohol lying next to the subject. Officer Sapp was able to wake up the subject after several attempts. The subject displayed numerous signs of impairment and was arrested for boating under the influence. He was transported to jail after he refused to give a breath sample.

Officer Sapp was conducting water patrol near Big Pine Key. He saw a vessel coming in from offshore with rods and reels commonly used for trolling and fishing deeper water on the vessel. He stopped the vessel and conducted a marine resource inspection which revealed eight mahi onboard the vessel. Of the eight mahi, seven were under the legal size limit of twenty inches fork length. The vessel occupants were cited accordingly.

Officer Alvarez responded to a complaint after a concerned citizen alerted FWC that there were multiple divers taking lobster out of season. Officer Alvarez saw the divers at the Vaca Cut Bridge near Marathon. He found a bucket of lobsters hidden in some bushes. Officer Alvarez arrested four individuals for six out of season lobster, two of which were undersized. They were also cited for no measuring device and no saltwater fishing license and lobster stamp.

Officers Stearns and Kleis were conducting shoreline patrol when they encountered four individuals fishing under a bridge. While conducting a resource inspection, Officer Stearns found a line tied off to a rock running into the water. Attached was a small chum bag containing four undersized schoolmaster snapper. One individual claimed responsibility and was cited accordingly.

Officers Stearns and Kleis were conducting shoreline patrol and inspecting incoming vessels at a boat ramp in Monroe County. They encountered an individual with 5 undersized lobster. The responsible party was cited accordingly and issued a notice to appear in court.

While patrolling in Monroe County, Officer Curbelo along with the United States Coast Guard conducted a vessel inspection. Officer Curbelo found one of the six lobsters on the vessel was an egg-bearing spiny lobster. The appropriate citations were issued and the egg-bearing spiny lobster was returned to the water.

Officer Yaxley was on patrol with the Coast Guard out of Islamorada. The officers were conducting fisheries inspections on bully netters. They came across a vessel traveling away from the mangroves at a high rate of speed. The vessel was stopped and upon inspection, it was found that two of their eighteen lobsters were undersized. Officer Yaxley cited the responsible individual accordingly.

Officer Yaxley was on vessel patrol when she responded to a request for assistance from the United States Coast Guard. The Coast Guard had stopped a vessel with a possible intoxicated vessel operator. Upon investigation she determined that the individual was impaired and placed him under arrest for boating under the influence (BUI).

While on patrol on FWC OPV Trident, Officers Foell, Richards and Piekenbrock saw five male subjects snorkeling from a vessel with no divers down flag displayed. As the officers approached the vessel, they saw a male subject with a net commonly used for catching spiny lobster. Once alongside, the subjects stated they did not have any lobster onboard. A further inspection revealed a red "solo" cup hiding underneath a dive fin, under a seat. The cup contained three out of season spiny lobster tails. Two of the lobster tails were under the legal minimum size limit. Post-Miranda, the owner and operator admitted to catching the three lobster and knew it was closed season. The subject was arrested and transported to the Monroe County detention facility on Stock Island, without incident.

Officers Foell, Richards and Piekenbrock responded to a report of a vessel against the rocks on US-1 near South Pine channel bridge. It was found that the registered owner was operating the vessel alone, the night prior, when he hit a concrete power pole. The collision caused the operator to be ejected. The vessel continued on plane, hit the bridge, and ended up on the rocks. The operator swam to land, walked to his residence and did not notify law enforcement. The operator was cited for improper look-out and issued a notice to appear for failure to notify law enforcement of a boating accident.

Officer Carroll was on patrol around Long Key bridge. He saw two subjects with multiple coolers exiting the bridge. After gaining consent to view the contents of the coolers, he discovered multiple species of short snapper. He found dog, mutton, schoolmaster, and mangrove which were all undersized. The proper notices to appear were issued and the fish were returned to the water.

Officers Yurewitch and Holcomb were assisting Monroe County officers with the lobster mini season. The officers were checking subjects along the overseas highway. The officers conducted a resource inspection on a group of individuals which revealed a dead tarpon. One individual admitted to catching and keeping the tarpon. The individual was cited accordingly.

Officers Yurewitch, Holcomb, and Hettel were on water patrol near Key West. The officers saw a vessel returning from offshore displaying a diver down flag. The officers conducted a vessel stop to address the violation. During the stop the officers saw dive gear and spear guns. The officers located 3 undersized hogfish which one individual admitting to shooting and keeping. The individual was cited accordingly.

Officers Thompson and Oldsen were on water patrol in Adams Cut near Key Largo. Officers noticed a vessel that was drifting sideways and had navigation lights that couldn't be seen. Officer Thompson conducted a safety equipment check and noticed signs of impairment from the operator. After conducting SFSTs, the operator was placed under arrest for operating a vessel while normal faculties impaired. He was transported to jail where he refused to give a breath sample.

Investigator Mattson responded to a PWC versus PWC crash around Key Largo. One of the PWCs crashed into the other and injured a male subject. Officers Rhoda and Maldonado arrived on scene to assist. The man was airlifted to Ryder Trauma Center in Miami. Investigator Mattson completed the boating accident report and charges are pending.

Investigator Mattson was conducting plain clothes water patrol looking for lobster poachers. He saw a man freediving in waters of the Upper Keys, about a mile off Tavernier Key. Investigator Mattson saw him shoot a fish and swim it back to the boat. Investigator Mattson approached the boat and identified himself as FWC law Enforcement. The man was cited for spearfishing in the Upper Keys.

Investigator Mattson was on unmarked land patrol around MM 83 when he saw a vehicle passing multiple cars in the center turn lane. Investigator Mattson stopped the vehicle to address the traffic violations. When checking the operator's driver license through FWC Dispatch, an active warrant was revealed. The no bail warrant was issued by the U.S. Marshals for a counterfeiting charge. The man was arrested and taken to Plantation Key Jail to be turned over to the Marshals after he was issued 2 traffic citations.

Officer Carroll was on patrol and watched four snorkelers as they harvested lobster on the south side of Long Key Bridge. After a resource inspection, the subjects were issued notices to appear for having wrung tails on the water, possession out of season, undersized tails, and no license or lobster stamp.

COLLIER COUNTY

While conducting water patrol, Officer Plussa was flagged down by multiple witnesses reporting a vessel being driven recklessly. The operator was traveling at a high rate of speed north through the wharf area in Naples Bay. Officer Plussa located the vessel, crashed into the mangroves. The sole occupant later identified as the owner and operator, was attempting to leave the scene. The subject admitted to Officer Plussa that he had been operating the vessel at a high rate of speed. The operator was arrested for reckless operation of a vessel, boating under the influence (BUI), and leaving the scene of an accident resulting in injury without notifying law enforcement. He was also cited for refusal to provide a breath sample, navigation rule violations, and an idle speed zone violation.

While on land patrol conducting marine fisheries inspections at Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park, Lieutenant Mahoney saw a vessel approach the boat ramp with fishing equipment on board. During an inspection of the vessel, he discovered a barrel containing six undersized mangrove snapper. Four of the fish were released alive and two of the fish were seized as evidence. The owner/operator of the vessel took full responsibility for the undersized fish and was cited accordingly.

Officer Plussa responded to multiple reports of a sea turtle nest being disturbed on Marco Island. One of the witnesses had been watching four people using a well-marked sea turtle nest area as a soccer goal. From a concealed location, Officer Plussa saw one adult and three teenagers kicking a soccer ball into the well-marked sea turtle nest. They entered the nest area with total disregard of the posted "do not disturb sea turtle nest" sign. The adult admitted to seeing the sign posted at the nest site. Officer Plussa issued the adult appropriate charges for disturbing the sea turtle nest.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROL

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Messier and Way conducted a three-day patrol of the Dry Tortugas and Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Tortugas North and South Ecological Reserves. While outbound towards the Dry Tortugas, Officer Messier and Way saw a high-performance center console travelling east-bound at a high rate of speed with fishing gear on board. Officers Messier and Way acquired the proper bearing so as to conduct an intercept of the high-performance vessel. Upon seeing the law enforcement vessel closing distance, persons on the bow of the vessel began moving about the console. Blue lights and sirens were activated, and the vessel came to a stop. Once alongside, a marine fisheries inspection revealed the operator to be over the bag limit of red grouper and six fillets of red grouper were found in a plastic bag hidden in a trash can. The operator was cited for the violations.

Officers Messier and Way conducted a marine fisheries inspection on a vessel at anchor on Colbin Rock with persons on board spearfishing. The inspection revealed undersized mutton snapper being used as bait, undersized black grouper and a filleted nurse shark not in whole condition. The operator and crew were cited for the violations.

While entering the Tortugas North Ecological Reserve (no-anchor and no fishing area), Officers Messier and Way spotted a target on radar on Tortugas Bank. At a two-mile distance, the officers identified the vessel as a 100 ft. charter head boat that frequents the area. The officers proceeded closer and saw that the vessel was on anchor and not using the mooring buoys available to them a few hundred yards away. The officers came alongside to conduct an inspection and found the vessel to be operating under a researcher permit. Although the research staff had the proper permits on board, the for-hire captain was in violation of anchoring inside the Tortugas North Reserve. In addition, the inspection revealed that crew members of the vessel had harvested and were in possession of snapper and grouper species. The vessel captain was cited for the violations.

Officer Yaxley was on patrol with the Coast Guard out of Islamorada near Alligator Lighthouse when they noticed an individual anchored and actively engaged in fishing in the Special Protected Area. As they approached, the individual was attempting to reel in a catch. The individual had his GPS on which noted the area as the SPA along with the physical markers. Officer Yaxley cited the individual accordingly.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Dube gave a FWC presentation on the do's and don'ts for the "Lobster Sport Season" at the Ocean Reef Club's Town Hall in North Key Largo. Officer Dube gave a brief overview on the current laws and regulations along with boating and dive safety tips to keep everyone safe. Officer Dube passed out FWC information and concluded his presentation with a Q and A session.

Officer Dube was on the radio show circuit in the Upper Keys discussing the laws and regulations for the upcoming "Lobster Sport Season." As the guest speaker on several local media market radio shows, he gave tips on how to stay safe and obey the laws and regulations during the lobster 2-day sport season.

Officer Dube was the co-host on the Friday night radio show with Captain Bill Kelly from the new Sandbar restaurant in Islamorada. Officer Dube talked about the upcoming lobster mini-season and all the do's and don'ts. They also discussed dive flag and boating safety tips to keep everyone safe during this annual event which draws approximately 50,000 people to the keys from all over the United States and world.

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Plussa attended the Audubon Society of Western Everglades season-end meeting held in Marco Island and spoke to a group of over 100 residents regarding the shared success between Audubon biologists and the University of Florida during the 2018 burrowing owl nesting season. The geographical and banding data combined with FWC enforcement efforts resulted in over 190 pair of burrowing owls. These efforts doubled the number of chicks into adulthood.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officer Negrón responded to an emergency about a person drowning at the Haulover Sand Bar within Miami Dade County. The call came from FWC Lieutenant Smith who brought the person to Haulover fuel point. The subject was unconscious and foaming of the mouth and with no pulse. Lieutenant Smith and Officer Negrón began CPR until emergency medical services arrived and took over the scene. Lieutenant Smith and Officer Negrón continued to assist EMS with CPR. Two witnesses stated that they were anchored at the Haulover Sand Bar and they saw the subject in the water and after a few minutes they saw him floating face down in the water. EMS transported the subject to Aventura Hospital Emergency Room. At the hospital, Officer Negrón met with an ER nurse and physicians who advised that the subject was in a stable condition with a possible spine injury.

COLLIER COUNTY

The Collier County Sheriff's Office requested assistance from FWC in a search for missing individual in Immokalee. The missing person, an 82-year-old male had walked away from his home the prior evening. Lieutenant Bulger and Officers Reams and Thurkettle responded with an all-terrain vehicle and swamp buggy to search the area. An extensive search of nearby wooded areas, orange groves and farm land were conducted. The subject was not located during the search. Collier County Sheriff's Office is continuing to investigate.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

MONROE COUNTY

The Keys FWC dive team members met with members of Monroe County Sheriff's office at the Coral Restoration Foundation in Key Largo. The team members were given a history and education classroom session. Lieutenant Pomares, Investigators Mattson and Hein and Officer Way went out to dive an area between Pickles and Conch Reef known as the Tavernier Nursery. The divers did a 2-tank dive followed by cleaning some of the coral "trees." On the second dive, team members prepared and hung coral on the trees. At the end of the second dive they used a lift bag to bring up 2 old derelict spiny lobster traps. The traps were in the nursery and could have caused damage to the coral.

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Polly and McVaney responded to a residence in North Naples regarding a bear complaint. Upon arrival, the homeowner told them that a bear had been in her house. The bear had entered through a screened patio then accessed the home through an open window. Once inside the house the bear rummaged through the trash and removed and ate items from the refrigerator. The bear exited through the same window. Officers notified the area bear biologist and a trapping effort is underway.