

# FWC

## Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report



**August 24, 2018 through September 6, 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**

Officers Swindell and Pino were on patrol in St. George Island State Park when they encountered three individuals exiting the east end fishing area. The officers noticed the truck contained multiple fishing rods and conducted a resource inspection. During the inspection, they discovered 24 egg bearing blue crabs. The appropriate action was taken for the violation.

Officer Travis was on patrol near the Apalachicola Bridge when he saw several subjects fishing under the bridge. After checking multiple subjects and coolers, Officer Travis located two undersized redfish and one undersized spotted sea trout. The owner was cited for possession of undersized redfish and issued a written warning for possession of the undersized spotted sea trout.

##### **LEON COUNTY**

Officer Pekerol received a complaint of possible hunting during a closed season on the Ochlockonee River WMA. During his investigation, he located a vehicle that had hunting equipment inside. Officer Pekerol was able to contact the vehicle owner who was dressed in camouflaged clothing and carrying a crossbow. The individual stated that he was hog hunting. Officer Pekerol issued the subject a citation for hunting in the WMA during a closed season.

##### **GADSDEN COUNTY**

Officer Brower was on land patrol just after midnight when he saw a car weave back and forth, cross the center line, and drive the center line for approximately 200 yards before returning into the correct lane. The driver of the vehicle then initiated the vehicle's left turn signal a quarter mile before the stop sign. Officer Brower conducted a traffic stop. Upon approaching the vehicle, he saw a female driver, a male passenger and a small child sleeping on the back seat. Officer Brower could smell the strong odor of an alcoholic beverage coming from inside the vehicle. He saw a beer can stuck in the center console and the driver was sweating and her eyes appeared bloodshot. The driver was not able to produce a valid driver's license. Officer Brower saw signs of impairment and provided the driver an opportunity to do field sobriety tasks and she declined. Officer Brower arrested the driver and transported her to the Gadsden County Jail. Upon arrival, the driver consented to a breath test sample which resulted in a 0.185 breath alcohol content, more than double the legal limit of 0.08 blood alcohol content. Charges for the driver were careless driving, knowingly driving while license is suspended, revoked, or canceled, Florida seatbelt law (passenger/operator under 18 years not belted or in a device), possession of open container of alcohol in a motor vehicle (driver) and DUI.

#### OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Bartlett was on land patrol working boating safety and resource protection at Joe's Bayou Boat Ramp. The officer saw a 20-foot pontoon vessel returning to the ramp with two people onboard. Officer Bartlett saw the vessel's green starboard bow navigation light was not operational, and the Alabama vessel registration sticker displayed had expired on August 31, 2017. When the officer asked for the vessel's registration, the operator explained that he did not have a copy, and he had purchased the vessel in June 2017. The officer explained he had to title the boat in his name within 30 days per state law. Officer Bartlett cited the owner/operator for failure to transfer a vessel title within 30 days.

Officer Jarvis was patrolling Henderson Beach State Park and received information regarding a man illegally camping in an open grass area between the beach and the campground. When Officer Jarvis arrived, he saw an individual sitting on a park bench speaking with a park ranger. The officer saw a bed sheet, comforter and pillow on the ground next to him. It was determined the individual entered the park illegally from the beach side of the park. Throughout Officer Jarvis' communication with the individual, the individual was belligerent, argumentative, and spoke profanity. Officer Jarvis issued a citation for evasion of park fees and a warning for illegally camping. At the request of the park manager, the individual was given a trespass warning.

Officer Pifer responded to a boating accident at Crab Island involving a rental personal watercraft (PWC) and a 33-foot vessel. Officer Pifer's investigation determined that the PWC struck the anchored 33-foot vessel. An eyewitness stated prior to the accident that the PWC was doing circles in the no wake/idle speed zone at Crab Island. At some point, the operator of the PWC traveled straight at approximately 20 mph and struck the

anchored vessel at mid-range portside causing \$20,000 in damage. The operator of the PWC was found at fault and was issued a navigational rule citation for unsafe speed. No one was injured in the accident.

Officer Pifer and Lieutenant Clark were called-out to respond to a boating accident near the Mid-Bay Bridge. Information was received that a single vessel was swamped and capsized with five people in the water with only three life jackets. Destin Fire and Rescue personnel arrived on-scene first and were able to recover all five occupants and transported them to Joe's Bayou Boat Ramp. No one was injured. Officer Pifer arrived at the boat ramp and began the boating accident investigation. During his communication with the operator, he smelled a strong odor of an alcoholic beverage coming from the operator. After the boating accident investigation was completed, Officer Pifer requested the operator to perform field sobriety tasks (FST). Based on the FST performed, the operator was arrested for BUI. The operator was transported to the Okaloosa County Jail.

Officers Matechik, Wilkenson, and Corbin were on vessel patrol conducting boating safety inspections on the east side of Crab Island. The officers saw a pontoon in violation of the idle speed/no wake zone. The officers stopped the pontoon to address the violation and during the boating safety inspection, the operator displayed indicators of impairment. Officer Corbin requested the operator to perform field sobriety task (FST). Based on the FST performed, the operator was arrested for BUI. The operator refused to provide a breath and blood sample. The operator was transported to the Okaloosa County Jail. The operator had three prior DUI arrests.

Officers Corbin, Matechik and Pifer were on vessel patrol in the Destin Harbor. The officers saw a 27-foot Boston Whaler traveling west bound in the harbor with no registration numbers or decal displayed on the port (left) side. A vessel stop was initiated to address the violation. They determined the operator was the owner of the boat and that he bought it several months ago. The owner was cited and issued a notice to appear citation for failure to transfer vessel title in his name within 30 days.

Officers Matechik, Wilkenson and Corbin were on vessel patrol conducting boating safety inspections when they saw a pontoon style vessel underway on the east side of Crab Island. The vessel had several adults, one child, and one infant on-board. The infant was not wearing a lifejacket. Any child under the age of 6 is required to wear a lifejacket while the vessel is underway. A vessel stop was made to address the violation. The officers determined the vessel was rented and was not provided the proper life jackets for the children and infant. The officers went to the livery and spoke to the employee who provided the safety equipment. The livery personnel were cited and issued a notice to appear citation for failure to provide the required safety equipment.

Officer Corbin was on vessel patrol in the Destin Harbor when he identified a derelict vessel anchored on state waters. The vessel does not have a means of propulsion, no sail or motor, is extremely barnacle laden, has approximately one foot of standing water inside of the cabin and stern, no active means to dewater, and has an anchor light that

is not sufficient (bright). The vessel has continued to deteriorate in condition since being anchored in the Destin Harbor. Officer Corbin contacted the registered owner and confirmed that he was still the owner of the vessel. He issued a notice to appear citation to the owner for the derelict vessel.

Officer Corbin was on land patrol in Shalimar conducting boating safety and resource inspections. The officer saw several individuals fishing from the Shalimar Bridge. As he was walking along the bridge, he saw two individuals, one male and one female begin packing up their fishing equipment and walk in his direction to the parking lot. As they approached each other, the officer saw the tail of a large red drum sticking out of a five-gallon bucket. The red drum measured 29 inches in total length. The legal slot size is 18 to 27 inches in total length. One of the individuals took responsibility for harvesting the oversized red drum and was issued a notice to appear citation.

A bear education initiative was conducted in the community off Brian Circle in Mary Esther. This initiative was generated through complaints received from home owners reference a female bear and her three cubs roaming the neighborhood and feeding from garbage cans. The female bear entered a fenced backyard to access the garbage can when the homeowner let the dog out. The bear attacked the dog. The dog was injured but survived. An unsuccessful attempt was made to capture the bear with the use of a trap. A total of 96 homes were contacted and provided bear brochures explaining the law requiring homeowners to secure their garbage. Nineteen non-compliance letters were issued to homeowners.

## SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Lewis was checking users in the Blackwater State Forest when he saw a gopher tortoise in the bed of a truck. He identified the owner of the truck and evidence indicated that it had been in the truck for a while, and the man was far from where he picked the tortoise up. Officer Lewis charged the man with the unlawful possession of a threatened species.

Officer Hutchinson and Lieutenant Hahr were patrolling near the Escambia River when they saw a boat with alligator hunters. After watching the subjects attempting to take alligators, they contacted them to check their permits. Two of the three men onboard were permitted to take alligators, but their permits were not for Escambia County, which included the tributary where they were located. The two men were cited for attempting to take alligator outside their harvest area.

## WALTON COUNTY

Officers Letcher, Tison and Bradshaw received a call from the Walton County Sheriff's Office regarding a traffic stop that uncovered a large amount of saw palmetto berries. The officers responded and ascertained that the berries were illegally harvested from Topsail Hill State Park by five different individuals. The individuals were in violation of

multiple state park rules and laws regarding the harvest and transportation of saw palmetto berries. The individuals were cited for the violations.

Officer Tison was on patrol when he saw several individuals at an intersection loading a truck with large sacks. Surrounding the intersection on all sides was private property that is heavily wooded with palmetto plants. After a closer look, Officer Tison saw palmetto berries in buckets in the back of the vehicle. The harvesting of saw palmetto berries requires permits from the Department of Agriculture for harvest on private lands, written landowner permission, and permits to transport for sale saw palmetto berries. Officer Tison conducted a traffic stop and found the driver of the vehicle to be operating the vehicle without a valid driver's license, and the individuals possessed no permits or landowner permission. The individuals were warned for the violations, the berries were seized, and the driver was arrested for driving without a license.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officers Hoomes, Lugg and Roberson responded by vessel to an aircraft crash with a single occupant in the Santa Rosa Sound. The officers assisted local first responders and maintained security of the site until FAA investigators arrived and took over the investigation.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Wilkenson participated in a freshwater fishing rodeo event at Anderson Pond on Eglin Wildlife Management Area for the Cub Scouts. The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation held the event. An FWC freshwater biologist assisted with this important youth initiative. Material such as fish identification and regulations were passed out. There were 115 youth who participated and earned scout patches.

## **NORTH CENTRAL REGION**

### CASES

#### DUVAL COUNTY

Officer Christmas was on routine patrol when he saw four male subjects in a vessel at Simpson Creek. A resource inspection of their catch revealed nine undersized red drum, twenty-one undersized black drum and two undersized spotted sea trout. Officer Barry responded to assist with the investigation. It was also determined there was no safety gear onboard the vessel. The fish were seized and all the subjects were issued the appropriate misdemeanor citations for the illegal fish and a uniform boating citation for not having the required safety equipment onboard.

Officers Geib and Read received information that an individual was keeping an alligator at his residence without proper licensing. They conducted an inspection and found evidence that the alligator was at the house and in the subject's vehicle. It was determined that the alligator was taken from a pond. Investigator Doricchi assisted when it was found that the subject had possession of several snakes. After consulting with the Duval County State Attorney's Office, the officers issued a citation for unlawful possession of alligator.

Officer Johnston was parked at a gas station in Lake City when a concerned citizen walked over and pointed out what he believed to be an impaired driver. Officer Johnston looked over and saw the driver sitting stationary at a traffic light that had turned green. The subject eventually drove off after the vehicle behind him began honking its horn. Officer Johnston followed the subject to another gas station and contacted the operator. Officer Johnston noticed the subject was exhibiting physical signs of impairment. Officer Johnston could also smell the odor of cannabis coming from the vehicle. The subject performed poorly on field sobriety exercises and was transported to the Columbia County Jail. At the jail, the subject refused to provide a urine sample as requested by Officer Johnston. He was booked into jail for DUI while normal faculties impaired and possession of cannabis less than 20 grams.

A Jacksonville resident paid several people to cut down a tree on her property. A witness saw them illegally dispose of a large portion of the debris several blocks away on property owned by the City of Jacksonville. Environmental Investigators Terrones and Starling interviewed one of the workers who admitted to the dumping. The subject agreed to dispose of the litter properly and was cited accordingly.

## TAYLOR COUNTY

Officer Colasanti was on patrol at Hickory Mound Impoundment and Cow Creek Grade when he saw a vehicle parked on the side of the road. He approached the two male subjects who were gigging frogs in the creek. Officer Colasanti completed a resource inspection and found an alligator tail under the subject's toolbox. The driver of the vehicle claimed ownership of the alligator tail and was cited accordingly.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

## CITRUS COUNTY

Officers Ulrich and Browning were on water patrol in Crystal River when they received a call about an elderly subject in a canoe who was having difficulty breathing. The officers responded to the location and located the individual with the medical emergency. The subject was gasping and complaining of breathing difficulty. The officers quickly relocated the individual onto the patrol vessel and transported him to a nearby boat ramp where EMS was standing by to assist.

## **NORTHEAST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **MARION COUNTY**

Officer Seiler was on foot patrol around Salt Springs Marina when he saw a vessel alligator hunting on the waterway near Salt Springs. Officer Seiler made contact for a resource inspection. The vessel operator provided a permit for Lake George Unit. The permit specifically described the permitted area as Lake George only, not the connecting waterways. Officer Seiler issued the subject a notice to appear for hunting outside of the permitted area.

#### **VOLUSIA COUNTY**

Officer West was on patrol when he saw a vehicle being operated and unable to remain in its lane. After getting the vehicle stopped, a driving under the influence (DUI) investigation resulted in the arrest of the adult female operator. She was booked into the Volusia County Jail.

While on water patrol on the St. Johns River, Officer Thornton saw a vessel occupied by two subjects violating a posted speed zone. He conducted a vessel stop to address the violation. During the stop, Officer Thornton developed reasonable suspicion to believe the vessel operator was impaired by alcohol or drugs. He conducted a boating under the influence (BUI) investigation and placed the vessel operator under arrest for BUI. The subject declined to provide a breath sample.

While on water patrol near Lake Monroe Park on the St. Johns River, Officers Cameron and Muina saw a vessel occupied by five adults violating the posted slow speed zone. The officers conducted a vessel stop to address the violation. During the stop, Officer Cameron developed reasonable suspicion to believe the vessel operator was impaired by alcohol or drugs. He conducted a boating under the influence (BUI) investigation and placed the vessel operator under arrest. The subject declined to provide a breath sample.

Officers Bertolami, McDonough and Demeter worked a joint operational detail with United States Coast Guard personnel from Station Ponce and Mayport. The focus was to enforce rules and laws pertaining to reports of the operation of charter boats without the properly licensed operators and/or vessels not carrying the required safety equipment.

Officer Pelzel, Investigator Cogburn and Lieutenant Riley were patrolling the Edgewater area over the holiday weekend. After stopping a vessel for a safety equipment inspection, Officer Pelzel arrested the adult male operator for boating under the

influence (BUI) and refusing to submit to a breath test. He was booked into the Volusia County Jail.

FWC officers, investigators and other agencies responded to a reported single vessel accident in the Edgewater area. A juvenile male with multiple lacerations was transported by helicopter to an Orlando hospital. An ongoing investigation into the cause of this accident is being conducted by FWC Investigations.

Officer Bertolami was checking vessels returning from fishing in the Port Orange and New Smyrna Beach area. An adult male was found to be in possession of out of slot size limit of black drum and another adult male had an out of slot size limit of red drum – and an out of slot size limit snook hidden in a compartment within his boat. Both were issued criminal citations for the violations.

## ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Officer Graves has been consistently inspecting Inlet Bridge over the past two weeks with the annual late summer/early fall finger mullet run in full force at the Matanzas Inlet area. Redfish and sheepshead fishing has been particularly strong and on four separate days Officer Graves has issued a combination of citations and written warnings for the following violations: possession of oversized redfish (three violations), possession of undersized redfish, possession of undersized sheepshead (three violations), exceeding the daily bag limit of sheepshead (two violations), possession of undersized mangrove snapper, and exceeding the daily bag limit of mangrove snapper.

While patrolling the Intracoastal Waterway near the Bridge of Lions in downtown St. Augustine, Officers Thomas and Lawrence saw a personal watercraft (PWC) travel on a plane through the slow speed bridge zone. The officers conducted a vessel stop to address the violation. The operator's two minor children were onboard the PWC sitting behind the man. A boating safety inspection and Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks (SFSTs) revealed the man was operating the PWC while impaired. The subject was arrested for boating under the influence (BUI) and was transported to the St. Johns County Jail. He refused to provide a breath sample and Officer Thomas booked him into the jail on the enhanced charge of operating a vessel while impaired with passengers under the age of 18.

Officers Thomas and Lawrence responded to a boating accident in the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) at the State Road 312 Bridge. Two vessels were heading in opposite directions just before dusk and the southbound vessel struck the one northbound. While speaking with the two parties, Officer Lawrence determined the southbound vessel operator may have been impaired. After a series of afloat Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks (SFSTs), Officer Lawrence arrested the man and transported him to the St. Johns County Jail. The vessel operator provided breath samples of .157 and .156 and Officer Lawrence booked him into the jail on the enhanced charge of operating a vessel with a breath alcohol content (BAC) of greater than .15.

Officers Harris and Greenier were on patrol in Anastasia State Park when they saw a man fishing a seine net in Salt Run. During their resource inspection, the officers found that the net was entirely constructed of monofilament; thereby classifying it as an entangling net. In addition, the net had a mesh area of 622 square feet and therefore exceeded the maximum square footage allowed by 122 feet. Officer Harris seized the net and placed it into evidence at the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office compound. He issued the subject a misdemeanor citation for the major resource violation of fishing a monofilament net in inshore waters and a written warning for exceeding the maximum square footage of 500 feet.

#### INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Officers Hadwin and Marroquin were working the statewide alligator hunt in the Stickmarsh when they saw two vessels alligator hunting. One of the vessels and subjects were found to not have an alligator harvest permit, along with several boating violations. A citation and warnings were issued.

While on vessel patrol Officer Stephenson conducted a resource inspection on a vessel returning from offshore. The inspection revealed the operator was in possession of one undersized black seabass and one gray triggerfish. A citation and warning were issued for the offense.

Officer Matthews was on patrol at a local boat ramp when he saw a vessel approach and dock. After speaking with the man and asking him about his catch, a resource inspection was conducted. Officer Matthews discovered one undersized gag grouper and two undersized mangrove snapper. A citation was issued for possession of undersized gag grouper and a warning for undersized mangrove snapper.

While on patrol Lieutenant Lightsey and Officer Delano saw a vessel returning from offshore. A resource inspection was conducted. The operator was found to be in possession of five cobia, two of which were under the legal size. Officer Delano issued a notice to appear for the violations.

While on patrol at a local boat ramp, Lieutenant Lightsey saw a jet ski operating carelessly in a congested area. While conducting a vessel safety inspection and addressing the violations the officer saw signs of impairment. After performing poorly on Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks, the operator was placed under arrest for operating a vessel while normal faculties were impaired. At the Indian River County Jail, a breath sample of .138 was recorded.

#### FLAGLER COUNTY

Officer Meade was at the Flagler County Court House taking care of paper work when he noticed out of a window two adult males fishing in a pond behind the court house. Officer Meade watched the men fish and catch some bass. His inspection of the

subjects revealed they were using bream to catch the bass and they used a cast net to catch the bream. One subject was issued a citation.

## LAKE COUNTY

Officer Teal was patrolling Richloam Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when he found several individuals with two vehicles stuck. A check of the individuals revealed that one had a warrant out of Missouri for numerous violent crimes with full extradition. The subjects were cited appropriately and the one subject was arrested for the outstanding warrant.

## BREVARD COUNTY

Officer Platt and Lieutenant Zamonis were on airboat patrol in Lake Hell N Blazes when they saw a subject catching an alligator. Once the alligator was secured on the vessel and they began to pull away from the area, the officers conducted a resource check. The alligator was not yet tagged with a CITES tag and one subject was not properly licensed. The subjects were cited for taking alligator without a license and warned for not immediately tagging the alligator.

While on late night patrol Officer Matthews heard a vessel returning to a private dock. The vessel did not have proper navigation lights displayed and was playing loud music. Officer Matthews approached to address the navigation light violation. While speaking to the operator, Officer Matthews smelled the strong odor of alcoholic beverages and the operator fell inside the vessel. The operator refused to perform standardized field sobriety tasks and stated he was not operating the vessel. As Officer Matthews spoke to one of the other passengers that had already exited the vessel, the operator exited the vessel and ran. Officer Matthews was able to secure the operator and placed him under arrest for operating a vessel while normal faculties were impaired and resisting arrest without violence.

While on foot patrol on SR 528 and the Indian River, Officer Balgo saw an individual cast netting along the seawall. A resource inspection located five undersized mangrove snapper in a mesh bag. The individual was cited for possession of undersized mangrove snapper and warned for illegal method of take for mangrove snapper.

While on foot patrol on the Pineda Causeway and Indian River, Officer Balgo saw two individuals carrying buckets to their vehicles. A resource inspection revealed 20 sheepshead, 18 of which were undersized. The two individuals were cited for possession of undersized sheepshead and received two warnings for over the bag limit of sheepshead and no fishing license.

While patrolling near the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge off Hall Road, Officer Balgo saw a suspicious vehicle parked off the road. Officer Balgo was able to locate an individual harvesting saw palmetto berries. US Fish and Wildlife Officer Prescott issued

the individual one federal citation for harvesting saw palmetto berries without a permit and one warning for trespassing.

While on water patrol in Haulover Canal, Officers Balgo and Humphrey saw three individuals fishing along the shoreline. Officer Humphrey beached the vessel so Officer Balgo could perform a resource inspection. The officers found a 10.5-inch snook in a bucket. After interviewing the subjects, one admitted to catching the snook. The individual was cited for possession of an undersized snook.

Officer Balgo created a targeted enforcement detail for the recent blue crab trap closure for Brevard County. Officers Balgo, Delano, Humphrey, Wehner, and Lieutenant Davis patrolled the Banana and Indian River from US 192 to the Mosquito Lagoon. The detail found several trap violations including traps placed during closed season buoy violations, name and address not affixed, no biodegradable panel, escape ring violations, and traps placed in a navigable channel. Thirty resource warnings were issued, and four misdemeanor charges were filed with the Brevard County State's Attorney Office.

While on land patrol Officer Rasey responded to a report of a resident keeping raccoons as pets. Upon arrival, he noticed deplorable conditions to include garbage everywhere, fresh pet food on the driveway, raccoons and a heavy presence of flies due to animal fecal matter. Additionally, there were open holes in the home's structure. In the week that followed, Officer Rasey returned with County Code Enforcement, Department of Health, Animal Services, and the Sheriff's Office to do a joint inspection of the property. The home was condemned by the county and the following criminal violations were addressed: creating or maintaining a public nuisance, placing food or garbage in a manner which attracts raccoons, and littering on private property which results in a public nuisance.

During the two-weekend red snapper season Officer Humphrey participated in a detail targeting boats coming into Freddy Patrick Park boat ramp from offshore at Port Canaveral. Officer Humphrey inspected multiple vessels including a vessel where he located undersized vermilion snapper and vessel where he located an undersized cobia. Each subject in possession of the undersized fish were cited accordingly.

## OSCEOLA COUNTY

Officer Stelzer was on land patrol off West Lake Toho when he witnessed five individuals alligator hunting prior to 5:00 PM. Officer Stelzer watched from land while the individuals harvested an alligator. Officer Summers was picked up Officer Stelzer by airboat and the officers contacted the subjects. The alligator was still not tagged when the inspection was made, despite the time lapse between the take and inspection. The individuals were charged for hunting prior to 5:00 PM and for not immediately tagging the alligator.

Officer Stelzer was on patrol of Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and saw three individuals alligator hunting in a canal south of Lake Jackson. The individuals were over 500 yards outside of the Lake Jackson Alligator Management Unit. Officer Stelzer and Lieutenant Trusley contacted the subjects and conducted a resource inspection. The subjects did not have tags allowing them to hunt the area. The subjects were cited for hunting alligators out of their designated area.

## PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Wester conducted a fisheries inspection on a male subject fishing in Crescent Lake. It was found that the subject was in possession of 33 black crappie, which was eight over the bag limit. The subject was cited for possession of over the bag limit of crappie.

Officer Jones conducted a resource inspection on a vessel that was alligator hunting on the St. Johns River. The inspection revealed that two subjects were using baited hooks to catch alligators. Both subjects were cited for attempting to take alligators by illegal method.

Lieutenant Dickson and Officer Bernard were on boat ramp patrol at Johnson's Landing when a vessel approached with two subjects that had been alligator hunting. A check of their license revealed that they were hunting over one week before their assigned phase. Both subjects were cited for attempting to take alligators out of phase.

Lieutenant Dickson was on patrol at Salt Springs Marina when he saw a vehicle that was parked blocking a section roped off for emergency vehicles. He also noticed that the boat trailer had a license plate and the truck did not. When the owners returned he contacted them and found that they had removed the tag from the truck and attached it to the boat trailer. One subject was cited for attaching a tag that was not assigned to the vehicle.

Officer Jones was on river patrol when he saw a subject urinating off the back of his vessel with no regard to his surroundings. A vessel stop was conducted, and the operator was found to be intoxicated. The subject refused all sobriety tasks and a breath test. He was cited for operating a vessel with normal faculties impaired.

Officer Cheshire was on patrol on Subject Road near Caravelle Wildlife Management Area when he saw corn thrown on the side of the road. A vehicle appeared a short time later with no taillights that was using a spotlight to look for game. Officer Cheshire watched this activity for a while before initiating a traffic stop. The investigation revealed that the subjects had a loaded rifle in the vehicle and all were under 21 years of age and were consuming alcoholic beverages. All three subjects were cited for attempting to take deer with gun and light. The driver was cited for driving under the influence and both passengers were cited for possession of alcohol under 21 years of age.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

## OSCEOLA COUNTY

Officers Stelzer and Summers were on water patrol on West Lake Toho when they noticed two individuals in the water with an overturned canoe. The officers responded and helped the two subjects onto their patrol boat and were able to get the canoe upright. Both subjects had life jackets on and were brought safely back to the boat ramp.

## VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer Goodreau and Investigator McKinney responded to the Mosquito Lagoon area to assist in locating two adult females and two juvenile males who had become disoriented and lost while kayaking. The Volusia County Sheriff's Office (VCSO) helicopter was able to locate them after sunset and put out a crew member. Officer Goodreau and Investigator McKinney arrived by boat and ferried all back safely to shore.

Four adult males were on board a small center console style fishing boat in Mosquito Lagoon and became lost after dark. The VCSO helicopter was able to locate and direct Officer Goodreau to their location. Because of the low tide, two separate trips were needed to transport them safely to the shoreline.

## **SOUTHWEST REGION**

### CASES

## HERNANDO COUNTY

Officer Canamero was flagged down by a male subject who stated that he had been involved in an altercation with the mother of his child. Suicidal statements had been made by the female subject, to include their child. Officer Canamero ensured the well-being of the female and child and requested assistance from the local Hernando County Sheriff's Department. The male subject had visible injuries that had occurred during the altercation. The Sheriff's Office deputies arrived and after further investigation, the female subject was taken into custody on domestic battery charges.

Officer Canamero saw a vehicle parked near the edge of some private land. The officer contacted a female subject and during the interview, a gunshot was heard. Three additional subjects were located. Upon further investigation, one subject was found to be in possession of a concealed firearm without a permit and another subject was on felony probation. The subject with the concealed firearm, who also admitted to shooting the firearm, was taken into custody. During the inventory search of the subject's vehicle, one additional firearm was located along with a significant amount of synthetic marijuana ("Spice"). Additional charges are pending.

Officer Canamero and Officer Sehl stopped a vessel and conducted a fisheries inspection. The operator was found to be in possession of over the bag limit and not in whole condition of shark, and an undersized and not in whole condition spotted sea trout. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officer Canamero and Officer Sehl stopped a vessel running without navigation lights. A fisheries inspection of the catch revealed the operator was in possession of over the bag limit of redfish. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officer Little was conducting resource inspections of vessels returning to the Aripeka Boat Ramp. Upon checking one vessel, the operator was found to be in possession of four undersized hogfish. The operator was charged accordingly.

Officer Little and Officer Canamero conducted a resource inspection of a subject returning to shore in his canoe near Pine Island. Upon inspection, the subject was found to be in possession of an oversized redfish. He was cited accordingly.

Officer Scinta was conducting fisheries inspections of subjects along Bayou Drive. He located a subject who had several undersized black drum. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officer Little and Officer Canamero were on water patrol near Aripeka when they stopped a vessel for a routine check. The subject on board was found to be in violation of net transit laws. Lieutenant Grover met them at the boat ramp where the nets were seized as evidence. The subject will be charged accordingly.

## HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Officer Catalano and Lieutenant Fugate stopped an individual who was shining a spotlight in a rural farm area from a roadway. A search of his truck determined that the father and his son were in possession of a rifle. The father was issued a citation for displaying a light in a manner of disclosing deer while possessing a firearm.

## HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Lieutenant Holcomb, K9 Handler/Officer Gaudion and "K9 Rita" were conducting open K9 air sniffs of a vehicle located west of the Courtney Campbell Boat Ramp. "K9 Rita" was deployed near a Ford F-150 where she located a bucket concealed next to a tree beside the vehicle. The K9 gave a final point of detection/ final response on the bucket indicating the presence of fish or game. The bucket was found to contain an undersized snook that measured thirteen inches. From a concealed location the officers saw the owner of the white truck return to the vehicle a brief time later. The subject took ice out of his cooler from his truck and placed it on the snook. The subject admitted to possession of the snook and was issued misdemeanor court appearance for undersized snook and possession of snook during closed season.

K9 Handler Officer Gaudion and his K-9 "Rita" were on patrol near Cockroach Bay Road. They saw multiple subjects jumping a fence while in possession of a cast net. While the K9 and Officer Gaudion were conducting a resource inspection on the subjects' vehicle, they located a tarpon in a bucket that one of the subjects admitted to catching with the cast net. The subject was issued a criminal court date in Hillsborough County for possession of a tarpon without a tag and tarpon taken by illegal method.

While on water patrol on the Hillsborough River in downtown Tampa, Officer Wilkins and Officer Specialist LaRosa stopped a vessel that was violating a slow speed zone. The officers intended to address the speeding issue as well as conduct a boating safety inspection. When the officers started the boating safety inspection, the operator handed Officer Wilkins a credit card when he was asked for his driver's license. He was also slurring his words and forgot to produce numerous items Officer Wilkins had asked for as a part of the inspection. Officer Wilkins conducted seated field sobriety exercises with the subject and after the subject performed poorly, he was arrested for boating under the influence (BUI). The subject agreed to give a sample of his breath, so Officer Wilkins (who is a breath test operator) began the twenty-minute observation period with the subject at the Hillsborough County Marine Unit substation. Immediately prior to the start of the breath test, the subject changed his mind and refused to give a sample. A criminal history check revealed that this was the subject's third refusal to submit to a breath test which makes him a habitual offender. The subject was arrested for BUI and refusal to submit to a breath test (third offense) and was booked into the Hillsborough County Jail.

While on water patrol in downtown Tampa, Officer Specialist Martinez saw a vessel operating at night with improper navigation lights. Officer Specialist Martinez stopped the vessel to address the lighting issue and saw the operator was hyperactive and overexcited. During a boating safety inspection, the operator had a difficult time following instruction and was forgetful when asked for safety items. Officer Specialist Martinez smelled an odor of alcohol coming from the operator and noticed that he had glassy eyes. Officer Martinez performed seated field sobriety exercises on the subject. The subject performed poorly on the exercises and was arrested for boating under the influence (BUI). The subject refused to give a sample of his breath. A background check revealed that this was the subject's second refusal of a breath test and he was booked into the Hillsborough County Jail for his violations.

FWC officers teamed up with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) Marine Unit out of their substation on the water to conduct a targeted detail in reference to boating under the influence (BUI) enforcement. FWC officers staged a truck for prisoner transport and a breath test machine at the substation to streamline the logistics of any BUI arrests. During a night shift where HCSO officers were the main agency in charge of the detail, FWC officers were called for assistance with regard to a BUI stop they were currently working in downtown Tampa. The operator of the vessel and its passengers were being extremely combative and refused to listen to commands. Officer Wilkins and Officer Specialist LaRosa responded by vessel to assist and aid in getting the vessel and its occupants towed to safety so that HSCO could proceed with arresting

the operator for BUI. Once back on land with the operator, Officer Godfrey transported him to the Hillsborough County Jail for HCSO, where he was booked into jail for BUI and refusal to submit to a breath test.

## MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Davidson, Lieutenant Hinds and Captain Carpenter were on water patrol in the Manatee River near the Palmetto Boat Ramp. While on patrol, they saw a vessel violating a slow speed area and stopped the vessel to address the violation. During the inspection, the officers got indicators from the operator of the vessel that he might be under the influence of alcohol. Officer Davidson had the operator perform a series of field sobriety tasks to determine the level of his impairment. After Officer Davidson concluded his investigation, the operator was arrested for boating under the influence and was taken to the Manatee County Jail. He will have to appear in court for his violation.

Officer Dalton was on water patrol in the area of the Manatee River near the CXS train tracks. He saw a vessel violating a slow speed zone and operating without the use of its navigational lights. Officer Dalton stopped the vessel to address the violations and quickly realized that the operator appeared to be under the influence of alcohol. Officer Dalton asked the operator to perform a series of field sobriety tasks to determine his level of impairment and the operator refused. Officer Dalton informed the operator that if he refused to perform any tasks he would be taken to jail for refusal to submit to field sobriety tasks. At this point the encounter became violent. The operator of the vessel tried to push him off the boat into the river. After an intense altercation, Officer Dalton was able to keep himself on the vessel and get the suspect off him. The suspect jumped into the Manatee River and started swimming towards the shoreline. Officer Dalton followed him as he swam and offered him a life jacket, so he would not drown. The suspect refused. Bradenton Police Department had been alerted and was waiting at the shoreline for the suspect. With their help, the man was apprehended without further incident. The suspect was booked into Manatee County Jail for two felony charges, six misdemeanor charges and several infractions. He will appear in court for his violations.

Officer Gonzales was on land patrol in the area of Fort Hammer Boat Ramp in Manatee County. He performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel that had just pulled into the ramp. Officer Gonzales got indicators from the operator of the vessel that he may be under the influence of alcohol. He had the operator perform some field sobriety tasks to determine his level of impairment. After Officer Gonzales' investigation was completed, the operator was booked into the Manatee County Jail for boating under the influence of alcohol. The suspect was given the opportunity to submit to a breath sample test and he blew well over the legal limit.

While on foot patrol at the South Skyway Fishing Pier State Park, Officer Bibeau contacted an individual that was actively fishing. The individual told Officer Bibeau that he caught some mangrove snapper. Officer Bibeau conducted a fisheries inspection

and located fifteen mangrove snapper. Officer Bibeau wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for possession of over the daily bag-limit of mangrove snapper.

## PASCO COUNTY

Officer Specialist Pulaski and Lieutenant Parisoe were on land patrol conducting fishery inspections around Fillman's Bayou. The officers saw an individual inside a vehicle throw something into the water. During their inspection, they learned the subject had marijuana inside the vehicle. The marijuana was seized as evidence and Officer Specialist Pulaski issued the individual a citation for possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis.

## LEE COUNTY

Officer Hardgrove and Officer Rarick were patrolling near a residential channel when they spotted two men on a boat returning from a day of fishing. When the officers activated their emergency lights and attempted to stop the boat for a fisheries inspection, the boat turned completely around and sped off. The officers followed and watched as one of the men threw a clearly undersized bull shark overboard. The men made a wrong turn in their flight and ran into a mangrove-lined cove with only one way in and out. During the inspection of the boat, the officers found an undersized spotted seatrout and a bluefish that had been cut up for bait instead of being maintained in whole condition. The two men were cited for the fisheries violations and interference with an inspection.

Officer Winton and Officer Hazelwood were on water patrol in Matlacha Pass when they saw a commercial blue crab vessel operator actively tending blue crab traps. The officers stopped the vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection – at which time they discovered that the subject had an expired saltwater products license (SPL). The SPL is required to commercially harvest saltwater products. The officers also determined that the subject had been written two prior warnings for the same violation. The subject was issued a notice to appear for commercially fishing without a saltwater products license, and a warning for improper marking of blue crab trap buoys.

Officer Winton and Officer Hazelwood conducted a wholesale/retail fisheries inspection at a business on Pine Island. During the inspection, it was determined that the company had not maintained the proper documentation of the purchases/sales of their saltwater products and had purchased saltwater products from a producer that did not have a valid saltwater products license. The investigation has been continued and multiple charges are being filed with the State Attorney's Office.

Officer Winton was on water patrol in Estero Bay when he saw an unmarked vessel with an operator actively pulling commercial quantities of blue crab traps. Officer Winton conducted a vessel stop, at which time additional violations were discovered pertaining to registration, safety gear, commercial licensing, and blue crab trap

construction/markings. The captain of the vessel was issued a notice to appear, a boating citation and multiple warnings for the related violations.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer Bibeau stopped a vessel which had a person nearby actively engaged in spearfishing to conduct a fisheries inspection. Officer Bibeau located an undersized gag grouper and an undersized tripletail. Officer Bibeau found that the operator of the vessel had previously been cited for gag grouper violations. Officer Bibeau wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for possession of an undersized gag grouper and a warning for the other fisheries violation.

Officer Bibler saw two people on PWCs violating a slow speed zone and made contact with the operators to address the issue. As he contacted the operators, he realized he had stopped the same PWCs in the past and believed they were being used in an illegal livery. Officer Bibler previously told the subject (owner) he suspected of illegally renting the PWCs, specifically what he needed to do to become a legal livery. Officer Bibler warned him he needed to be in compliance before he conducted any more business. Officer Bibler confirmed with the two operators that they rented the PWCs from the same subject Officer Bibler had spoken to before. Back at the boat ramp, Officer Bibler interviewed the subject running the illegal livery and cited him for three misdemeanor violations of livery laws.

Officer Bibeau, Officer Martinez and Lieutenant VanTrees stopped a vessel for a restricted area violation. While conducting the boating safety inspection the officers located dozens of scallops along with a half-pint of scallop meat. The owner of the vessel took responsibility for the scallops onboard the vessel and Officer Bibeau wrote the subject a misdemeanor citation for possession of scallops in a closed area.

Officer Bibeau saw an individual that was actively fishing from a bridge. Officer Bibeau watched the individual fish from a concealed location. Officer Bibeau lost sight of the individual as he walked down from the bridge and waited for the individual to return to his vehicle before making contact to conduct a fisheries inspection. The individual stated that he hadn't caught any fish and was preparing to go to another spot. Officer Bibeau conducted a fisheries inspection on the individual's cooler and located a large snook. Not only was the snook out of season, but Officer Bibeau found that the snook was also oversized and the individual admitted to catching it with a cast net. Officer Bibeau wrote the individual multiple misdemeanor citations for the fisheries violations and the snook was returned to the water alive.

Officer Bibeau saw an individual actively fishing from beneath a bridge. He watched the individual fish from a concealed location and waited until the individual began to pack up his belongings prior to making contact to conduct a fisheries inspection. At the end of the inspection, Officer Bibeau located 10 mangrove snappers, 3 of which were undersized, and 1 undersized sheepshead. Officer Bibeau wrote the individual one misdemeanor citation and two warnings for the fisheries violations.

Officer Nick Guerin conducted a fisheries inspection on a group of individuals on the northwest side of the Gandy Bridge. During the inspection, Officer Guerin located two undersized redfish (12.5 and 13 inches), an undersized sheepshead (10 inches) and an undersized mangrove snapper (8 inches). One of the subjects admitted to catching and possessing all the undersized fish. The individual was issued a notice to appear in court for the redfish violations and issued warnings for the other violations.

Officer Rorer and Officer Pettifer conducted a resource inspection. They discovered an individual to be in possession of nine mangrove snapper, six of which were undersized. The individual was cited for possession of undersized and over the bag limit of mangrove snapper.

Officer Bibeau saw an individual actively fishing from underneath a bridge. He watched the individual fish from a concealed location and saw the individual catch multiple fish and hide them in a small blue bag. Officer Bibeau waited for the individual to begin packing up his belongings before making contact to conduct a fisheries inspection. The individual told Officer Bibeau that he hadn't caught any fish. When Officer Bibeau asked about the fish that the man had hidden in the blue bag, the individual admitted to lying because he believed he had kept an illegal fish. Officer Bibeau conducted an inspection of the bag and located a fifteen-inch gag grouper. Officer Bibeau wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for possession of an undersized gag grouper.

Officer Bibeau and Officer Ferguson stopped a vessel returning from offshore to conduct a fisheries inspection. At the end of the inspection, Officer Bibeau located ten undersized hogfish. One of the individuals on board the boat took responsibility for the fisheries violation and was issued a misdemeanor citation for possession of undersized hogfish.

Lieutenant Van Trees and Officer Specialist Bibeau were on water patrol offshore of St. Pete Beach when they stopped a vessel to conduct a resource and safety inspection. The officers noticed signs of impairment from the operator to include slurring of words and a strong odor of alcohol. After completing a safety inspection with the operator, Lieutenant Van Trees conducted seated field sobriety tasks with him. The operator performed poorly on these tests. Lieutenant Van Trees arrested the operator for boating under the influence (BUI). The subject also agreed to submit to a test of his breath. The officers were able to get the subject to a breath test machine quickly and Officer Specialist Bibeau (who is a breath tech operator) was about to begin the test when the operator changed his mind and refused to give a sample of his breath. Through a communications center check, it was discovered that this was the operator's second refusal of a breath test, and he was booked into the Pinellas County Jail for BUI and refusal of breath test (second offense).

Lieutenant Van Trees was on land patrol when he stopped to inspect a local market that sold produce, vegetables and fish. Lieutenant Van Trees had been to the market before after receiving complaints of violations at the market – which resulted in the owner being

cited for his violations. Upon inspecting the fish at the market, Lieutenant Van Trees found that the owner did not possess the proper documentation for the fish as required by law. The owner was also in possession of an undersized red snapper. The owner had been told nearly a year prior to this inspection about all of the rules and regulations he needed to abide by and he was cited again for the same violations. The owner was issued a notice to appear for his violations and will be mandated to attend a court date.

## SARASOTA COUNTY

Officer Grenz was on land patrol in the area of the North Siesta Key Bridge in Sarasota County. While on patrol, she performed a fisheries inspection on a charter fishing captain that was dropping off his customers. During the inspection, Officer Grenz found that the captain had allowed his customers to keep two undersized red grouper. The captain was cited criminally for possession of undersized red grouper and will have to appear in court for his violation.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

## HERNANDO COUNTY

Lieutenant Grover and Officer Canamero were on patrol on PWCs in the Weeki Wachee River when they encountered a subject who had flipped his kayak and was holding onto a vine under overhanging branches. His wife told Officer Canamero that he could not swim. Officer Canamero jumped in and swam to the subject and began to pull him to a shallow area of the river. Lieutenant Grover maneuvered his PWC to both subjects and towed them to where they could safely touch the river's shore. The subject was shaken up, but otherwise okay.

## MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

## LEE COUNTY

Lieutenant Spoede responded by boat to a reported "manatee in distress" near Fort Myers Beach. Upon arrival he found a juvenile manatee having trouble breathing and appeared to be having seizures. A large manatee (possibly its mother) was assisting the juvenile by pushing it to the surface to breathe. FWC biologists and volunteers as well as Lee County deputies arrived on scene to help capture the animal. Lieutenant Spoede was able to maneuver his patrol vessel so that the distressed manatee could be captured in a net. The manatee was transported to Sea World's Rehabilitation Center where it will be treated and allowed to recover before it is released back into the wild.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

## HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Officer Adams was participating in a targeted enforcement action regarding Highlands County lakes and waterways. He saw a vessel with two subjects in it at the Hart's Bridge boat ramp on Arbuckle Creek. While conducting a boating safety inspection, a computer inquiry through dispatch revealed that one of the subjects had an outstanding warrant in Hardee County. The subject was arrested and booked into the Highlands County Jail.

## POLK COUNTY

Officer Earls and Officer Deweese along with Osceola County Sherriff's deputies conducted directed and proactive patrols to ensure safe boating and resource law compliance within the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes. Officer Earls' and Officer Deweese's efforts revealed a vessel with five occupants participating in the alligator hunt at approximately 3:00 a.m. The occupants were hunting with a county-wide alligator hunting permit and were in a restricted alligator management area. The permit holder was issued a misdemeanor notice to appear for hunting outside of the designated hunt area.

Officer Earls and Officer Deweese conducted a vessel stop while patrolling the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes. They found two occupants under twenty-one years of age in possession of alcoholic beverages. Both occupants received a misdemeanor notice to appear for possession of alcohol by a person under twenty-one years of age.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### PINELLAS COUNTY

Investigator DallaRosa gave a presentation on Florida's Statewide Boating Accident statistics and the critical missions of the FWC's Division of Law Enforcement Investigations Unit at Halifax Hospital's yearly "Trauma Talks" conference in Daytona Beach. The audience consisted of nearly 200 healthcare professionals including doctors, nurses and paramedics. Other presenters included trauma surgeons, emergency room doctors and the Deputy Chief of the Orlando Police Department. The audience was surprised to learn how significant boating accident occurrences are statewide, as well as the challenges that the FWC faces in promoting boating safety as a tool to prevent future vessel collisions on our waterways.

### CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Price was on land patrol when he conducted a resource inspection on an individual who was in a wildlife management area. During the inspection, Officer Price discovered what appeared to be deer meat in the subject's vehicle. After interviewing the subject, Officer Price discovered the man had shot the deer at another nearby management area. None of the deer meat was properly tagged and there was no proof of the sex of the deer. After further investigation, Officer Price determined the man had shot the deer on Babcock Ranch. Babcock Ranch has special permit requirements that

need to be closely followed. Officer Salem, Officer Furbay and Lieutenant Ruggiero were working the ranch and went to the camp to determine if the man had properly documented the deer harvest. The officers determined the deer harvest was not properly recorded and the jawbone was not saved so FWC biologists could age the deer. The man was issued four misdemeanors and the deer meat was seized as evidence.

Officer Salem received information about a group of people picking palmetto berries in a wildlife management area. He went to the area where he located a female in a vehicle who said she was just looking for wildlife. Officer Salem asked to look in the trunk of the vehicle and found loose palmetto berries and twigs. The female was adamant that she was not picking palmetto berries and was by herself looking for wildlife. After speaking with her for a few more minutes, the female admitted she had two men with her who were in the bushes picking the berries. The female called the men and they came out of the bushes from where they were hiding. They were issued misdemeanors for taking plants from a wildlife management area.

Officer Salem received information about people picking palmetto berries in a management area. He located a vehicle with one person inside driving around. The man driving the vehicle said he was just looking around. Officer Salem did not see anyone or anything in the vehicle, so he let the man go and searched the area. Unable to locate anyone, Officer Salem called Officer Goggin and Officer Morrison to assist. The three officers set up surveillance and waited. They stopped the vehicle just after dark before the driver could leave the area. This time, there were two people hiding in the back seat of the vehicle along with several hundred pounds of palmetto berries. They were issued misdemeanors for taking plants from a management area.

## RESCUES

### PASCO COUNTY

Officer Smith, Officer Hughes, Officer Alvis and Lieutenant Wells were called out from their residences at approximately 5:30 a.m. for a search and rescue mission thirty miles west of Hudson. The officers met at the 85' Offshore Patrol Vessel, Gulf Sentry, in St. Petersburg. The officers headed out to the coordinates of where one of the lost divers had last been seen. The officers were working closely with USCG and they received a parallel search pattern from them. Approximately five minutes before the officers started their search on the designated grid, which was approximately twenty miles west of Anclote Island, Officer Smith noticed something in the water several hundred yards away. Lieutenant Wells turned the Gulf Sentry and headed towards the object in the water. When the vessel got close, the crew realized that the object was the missing diver. They retrieved the exhausted diver from the water and performed a first aid assessment. The diver was rehydrated, kept warm and was able to call his wife. When the officers arrived in St. Petersburg, the diver disembarked from the Gulf Sentry and was reunited with his wife. The media was present at the dock and took statements

from Lieutenant Wells which were used for a broadcast about the FWC's successful rescue and recovery of the diver.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Lejarzar, Officer Birchfield and Lieutenant Ruggiero were participating in a directed offshore fisheries detail when they stopped a vessel about twenty miles offshore. During a resource inspection, Officer Lejarzar found several plastic bags containing fish fillets of red and gag grouper. The operator of the boat claimed he had caught all the fish. The officers also determined the man was not fishing with circle hooks as required for reef fish and he did not have a valid gulf reef fish permit. He was issued misdemeanor charges for failing to land reef fish in whole condition and for not using circle hooks.

Officer Lejarzar, Officer Birchfield and Lieutenant Ruggiero stopped a charter boat with several people on board. During the inspection the officers noticed the captain did not have any of the poles rigged with circle hooks as required for catching reef fish. The officers politely brought it to the captain's attention. The captain said he had circle hooks on board but refused to use them because they kill fish. After a brief conversation with the captain about the violation, he still refused to use the required circle hooks. The captain and the passengers cast their lines out and started fishing for reef fish even though they had not corrected the violation. Since it was obvious the captain had no intention to correct the violation, he was issued a misdemeanor notice to appear.

### DESOTO COUNTY

FWC Pilot Fields and Officer Alvis were able to direct Officer Geeraerts, Officer Cloud and Officer Kobs onto private property where several individuals were shining spotlights from their moving vehicles. Officers Geeraerts and Officer Cloud arrived on the property first and were able to stop one vehicle with four subjects inside. There were three loaded rifles, two handguns and a spotlight in the vehicle. Pilot Fields radioed to the officers on the ground that he had seen the subjects dump what looked like large animal several hundred feet from their location. Officer Cloud was able to locate and recover a male deer from information provided by one of the subjects in the truck. Pilot Fields was also able to guide Officer Kobs to a fifth subject who had escaped from the truck and was hiding near some buildings prior to the other officers arriving. Officer Kobs was able to detain the subject without incident. The subjects admitted to shooting and killing the deer with the aid of a spotlight. All subjects were given a notice to appear for hunting with a gun and light. The three rifles were seized by the officers and placed into evidence.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### PASCO COUNTY

Officer Specialist Phillippi and Officer Specialist Pulaski recently taught the boater safety class to the Pasco County Sheriff's Office Junior Explorer program. The students enjoyed learning about safe boating and will soon be sending in their tests to hopefully get their Boater I.D. cards. Officer Specialist Phillippi has partnered with the Pasco Sheriff's Office to assist in their Junior Explorer program, which gives young people insight to law enforcement and potential careers in law enforcement. Throughout the year, Officer Specialist Phillippi will be teaching students about FWC and setting up demonstrations with the kids to include K9 and other specialty units.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

Major Young, Captain DeWald, Lieutenants Hinds, Laskowski, Van Trees, and Officer Bibler attended the Eckerd College Search and Rescue (SAR) forum where numerous law enforcement agencies, United States Coast Guard, and local fire departments met to discuss SAR capabilities, tactics and recent rescues. It was also an opportunity for the Eckerd College students who are in the SAR program to meet with FWC officers about careers with FWC and see the area's new 29' Safeboat.

## **SOUTH REGION A**

### CASES

#### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Boyd was on land patrol at the Boynton Inlet. While conducting fisheries inspections on the jetty, he saw one man in possession of seven undersize mangrove snapper. Officer Boyd issued the subject a citation for the misdemeanor charge of possessing undersize mangrove snapper. The subject was also issued two warnings.

Officer Brodbeck was on patrol in the Jupiter Inlet when a vessel was seen returning from offshore with four individuals and fishing equipment in plain view. A stop was initiated to conduct a resource inspection. Upon contacting the operator and boarding the vessel, a fish box was found which contained numerous mahi and a tripletail. The tripletail and one mahi were below the minimum size limits, and nobody on board had a valid saltwater fishing license. The operator of the vessel was issued resource citations for possession of undersize tripletail and no valid saltwater fishing license, as well as a warning for possession of undersize mahi.

Officer Brodbeck was on vessel patrol in the ICW north of the 707 Bridge in Jupiter. A vessel with 5 individuals on board was seen accelerating speed while still under the bridge, which is a marked Slow Speed Zone. The officer activated the patrol vessel's blue lights to initiate a stop, and the operator of the vessel switched positions with another occupant, later identified as the vessel owner. The second operator slowed the vessel and Officer Brodbeck secured the vessels together to conduct a boating safety

inspection and to address the violation. Upon contacting both operators, signs of impairment were detected. A BUI investigation was initiated, and after having both subjects complete seated field sobriety tasks, both subjects were placed under arrest for BUI and transported to the Palm Beach County Jail with the assistance of Lieutenant Hankinson. At the jail, both subjects refused to provide a breath sample. The first operator of the vessel was issued uniform boating citations for BUI and refusal to submit to a breath test. The owner of the vessel was issued uniform boating citations for BUI, refusal to submit to a breath test (2nd or subsequent refusal), insufficient number of PFD's on board, and displaying expired registration decal.

Officer Webb responded to Camp B in the Corbett WMA regarding a physical altercation over a camping spot. Both parties were interviewed, and the same story was told to the officers on scene. It seems that one man told another man he needed to move his camper, and that this had been his spot for several years. The two men were enraged, and the argument became physical. This area is on a first come first serve basis, though every year law enforcement must respond to issues with subjects trying to claim what they think is their spot. Neither one of the men wanted to press charges.

Officer Gouveia followed tire tracks through two closed gates into the J.W. Corbett W.M.A. Corbett was currently closed to public access for two weeks before the hunting season opened. He stopped a truck heading south on the L-8 levee. The occupants admitted they knew they were in the wrong but took advantage of the unlocked (but closed) gates. The driver was issued a citation with a notice to appear and the passenger was given a warning.

Officer Brodbeck was on vessel patrol in Jupiter when a vessel was seen violating the slow speed zone west of the Jupiter Inlet. A vessel stop was initiated to address the violation and to conduct a boating safety inspection. During contact with the operator of the vessel, multiple signs of impairment were detected. After completing seated field sobriety tasks, the operator of the vessel was placed under arrest for BUI. At the Palm Beach County Jail, the subject refused to provide a breath sample. The subject was issued two boating citations for BUI and refusal to provide a lawful breath sample.

Officer Brodbeck was on patrol in Juno Beach when a vehicle was seen parked in the Juno Dunes Natural Area with saw palmetto berries in plain view. Two subjects were located, each with saw palmetto berry stems and shears in their hands. The officer contacted both subjects to determine if they possessed the proper permit to harvest saw palmetto berries. Both subjects stated that they did not have the required permit. Officer Brodbeck issued both subjects misdemeanor resource citations for harvesting saw palmetto berries without the required permit, and the saw palmetto berries were seized as evidence.

FWC received calls about subjects allegedly firing shotguns inside of the Corbett Wildlife Management Area during the opening weekend of archery season. Officer Norbrothen responded and was able to trace the firing to an area outside of Corbett WMA on South Florida Water Management property on the L-8 canal levee. The

subjects were target shooting and cited accordingly for public discharge of a firearm upon public property.

Officers Schroer and Boyd were conducting fisheries inspections at the Phil Foster Boat Ramp. During one of the inspections the officers found the owner of a vessel with two spiny lobster in his possession. Both spiny lobster had a carapace measurement of less than three inches as required by Florida law. The vessel owner was cited for possessing undersize spiny lobster and for not possessing a device capable of measuring the lobster carapace while harvesting.

## ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Toby recently followed up on an investigation he conducted several months prior. During that investigation, he issued a warning to an individual that was selling wildlife with an expired license. During the follow up inspection, he learned the individual was still actively selling wildlife, and the license had not been renewed. One misdemeanor citation was issued for selling wildlife with an expired license.

Captive Wildlife Investigators Toby and Alford conducted an unannounced inspection at a facility licensed to possess raccoons. The facility was in possession of several raccoons which did not have acquisition records. Sanitation issues were noted at the facility as well. Two misdemeanor citations and six warnings were issued for the violations noted.

## BROWARD COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Corteguera responded to the report of an 8-foot Asian water monitor that escaped. He was able to locate the owner, who verified that he owned the missing animal. One misdemeanor citation was issued for allowing the escape. Efforts to capture the animal are currently ongoing.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Corteguera responded to an animal hospital that had an African spurred tortoise dropped off at their location. The large tortoise was found roaming freely. Investigator Corteguera was able to locate the owner of the tortoise who released ownership of the animal. The tortoise was placed at a facility with other tortoises and one misdemeanor citation was issued.

Officer Holcomb was patrolling the area of the 39th Street spillway in Oakland Park when he saw 3 subjects in a common fishing area. There was a soft sided cooler and a bucket with a lid on it near the subject that was fishing. The subject stated that he had not caught any fish and the cooler and bucket were empty. During a fisheries inspection, Officer Holcomb saw that the bucket contained several fish including one very undersized and out of season snook. The third subject admitted that the fish were his and that he caught all of them. The subject was issued 2 criminal citations for the undersize and out of season snook and the fish was seized and entered into evidence.

While patrolling the area of the Hallandale Beach Bridge, Officer Holcomb saw 3 people fishing along the seawall under the bridge. During his fisheries inspection Officer Holcomb saw a cigarette pack with a small baggie containing a white powdery substance and a cut piece of straw stuck into the cellophane wrapper of the cigarette package. One of the subjects advised that the cigarette pack and its contents were his. The white powdery substance tested positive for cocaine. The subject was arrested for felony possession of cocaine and was booked into the Broward County Jail.

While patrolling the area of West Lake Park on Sheridan Street, Officer Armstrong and Lieutenant McDonald saw a subject throwing a large cast-net on the east side seawall. During a fisheries inspection, the subject was found to be in possession of a bucket full of unregulated species. At the bottom of the bucket was a small snook. The snook showed signs of being caught with the cast net and the subject was not in possession of any other fishing equipment. The subject was issued 2 criminal citations for the undersize snook and taking the snook by illegal method. The snook and the 12-foot cast-net were seized as evidence.

#### MARTIN COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Toby responded to a complaint regarding the illegal possession of a raccoon. Upon arrival, he found one subject in possession of a raccoon without a license. The raccoon was seized and placed at a licensed facility. Four warnings were issued for the illegal possession and related violations.

#### SEARCH AND RESCUE

#### BROWARD COUNTY

Officers Vacin and Lopez contacted an individual in Mizell-Johnson State Park who witnesses stated was acting unusual on the main road. The officers found that he was not doing anything illegal or criminal. Later in the day, the officers were told that the individual that matched their earlier contact was swimming in the Port Everglades Inlet. FWC, Broward Sheriff's Office and US Coast vessels arrived on scene in the inlet. The individual was holding onto a marker. The individual finally grabbed onto a Dania Beach Lifeguard board being pulled by Dania Beach Lifeguards on a personal watercraft. He was then able to make it onto some rocks. FWC Officers Grant and Lopez and Hollywood Fire Rescue EMS were able to contact him. Through an interview and the totality of the circumstances, Officer Lopez Baker Acted the individual and Hollywood Fire Rescue transported him to Regional Hospital without incident.

#### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Kirkland received a call from dispatch while patrolling Corbett. They advised a subject was lost around Leon Moss. Officer Stone joined in the search and after a brief time, the Sheriff's Office was able to locate the subject by air. A navigator was dropped down by the helicopter and the subject was escorted to the nearest levee.

## MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

### BROWARD COUNTY

Officer Grant responded to a neighborhood in Sunrise about a dispatch call concerning an injured owl. She arrived on scene and saw a screech owl exhibiting signs of illness. She took possession of the owl and delivered it to the Sawgrass Nature Center. It is currently recuperating, and hopefully it will be able to be released back to the wild.

### COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

#### BROWARD COUNTY

FWC officers along with marine units from the City of Ft. Lauderdale, City of Hollywood, and Broward Sheriff's Office Harbor Patrol, provided a range security/force protection for the U.S. Navy's NAVSEA WARFARE CENTERS. This detail was supported by the Regional Domestic Security Task Force (RDSTF), that is made up of local law enforcement agencies marine units. The task force was asked to provide protection. As the Navy is commissioning new Virginia Class submarines, the hulls must be calibrated to control the electromagnetic signature it gives off.

#### MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Kirkland taught the laws & ethics portion of the hunter safety course in Palm City.

#### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Three local officers attended FWC dive team training. All team members are now certified rescue divers and overhead/cavern divers. All team members also were trained on the operation of sector scan sonar, side scan sonar, and dry suit operations.

Officer Stone went to Independence Middle School for career day. He spoke to the students about conservation law enforcement. They went outside where they learned more about FWC's specialized equipment. The students enjoyed the hands-on experience.

## **SOUTH REGION B**

### CASES

#### MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officer Dominguez was on land patrol when he made a stop at Matheson Hammock marina and conducted a fisheries inspection on a returning vessel that had two subjects on board. The subjects had eleven mangrove snapper inside a cooler along with seven more in a recirculating live well – a total of eighteen snapper. The daily bag limit for that species of fish is five per-person. The captain of the vessel was cited for the over-the-limit violation.

Officer Saavedra, Dunn, McKinley, and Padilla were on uniformed land patrol when they saw a subject pulling water bottles connected to metal star traps designed to catch blue crab. Upon contacting the subject, he stated he had 18-19 traps in the water. Officers Dunn and McKinley recovered 23 traps from the water marked with water bottles. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officer Dunn and Padilla were on uniformed land patrol at Haulover Boat ramp when they saw a small white vessel enter the marina without an all-around white light. Officer Dunn conducted a vessel stop and found the vessel's safety gear in compliance. Upon conducting a saltwater resource inspection, Officer Dunn found four undersize mutton snapper and one porkfish. The vessel operator claimed possession of all the fish and was cited accordingly.

While on park patrol in Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park, Officer Carper noticed three individuals with pole spear devices and a mesh net container with a lobster. One of the individuals was getting back into the water ignoring the restricted area sign and fence. Upon inspection, the three individuals had an undersized spiny lobster which had been speared through the front of the carapace within the state park. They were cited accordingly.

Officer Padilla and Saavedra were on state park patrol in Bill Baggs Cape Florida when they were checking subjects along the fishing piers. Officer Padilla noticed an individual exiting the water through the rocks with lobster harvesting equipment on the south side of No Name Harbor. He maintained visual on the subject and utilized binoculars to confirm the subject had a mesh bag that contained several spiny lobster. The subject was walking back down the trail to the parking lot. Officer Padilla kept the subject in view and made his way to the trail entrance to intercept the subject. Once contact was made a fisheries inspection revealed that the subject was in possession of 6 spiny lobster of which 4 were undersize. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officer Padilla and Investigator Martin were conducting surveillance at 79th street boat ramp when they saw a vessel enter the boat ramp and tie up to the dock with 4 persons on board. The operator quickly exited the vessel and ran to his vehicle to back up the trailer and load the vessel. Officer Padilla recognized the operator as a local PWC livery contractor and performed a vessel stop. At first the 3 occupants were hesitant to disclose any information and stated that they were friends with the operator. The occupants advised that they rented PWC's from the operator and he was going to take them back to the house where they rented the PWC's. Officer Padilla conducted a livery inspection that revealed the livery owner issued boater education temporary certificates

that were not checked for correct answers. Further inspection of the boating education temporary certificate revealed that the renter had failed to achieve the minimum number of correct answers of 19 to be issued a "pass" test. The renter only had 2 correct answers out of 25 and should not have been issued a temporary certificate. The livery owner was cited accordingly.

Officer Washington and Officer Carper stopped two subjects fishing from the shoreline at Oleta River State Park. There was a bucket with live bait near them. They were in possession of four undersize schoolmaster snapper, one undersized gray triggerfish, two undersize mutton snapper, and eight undersize mangrove snapper. All the fish were not alive. They were provided saltwater recreational fishing regulations and their violations were explained. Appropriate citations were issued for the violations.

Officer Sarmiento conducted a vessel stop on an individual operating a PWC on plane in a posted manatee zone. The individual showed signs of impairment by marijuana and alcohol. After being arrested for BUI, the subject was also found to be in possession of marijuana and a loaded firearm on his PWC. The subject had priors for DUI and refusal. He was cited for BUI, criminal refusal and possession of marijuana.

## MONROE COUNTY

Officer Foell responded to a report of a boating accident involving multiple commercial fishing vessels at a marina on Stock Island. Upon arrival, Officer Foell found a subject onboard 32-foot commercial vessel which had significant fiberglass damage to the bow, exposing it to water intrusion. The subject was drinking rum out of a bottle upon arrival. The subject had red glassy eyes and the odor of an alcoholic beverage coming from his breath. The subject continued to lose his balance and was bracing on objects to hold himself up. Upon investigation, Officer Foell found that the subject had taken the vessel from a nearby marina and struck three docked vessels and a large rock shoreline while attempting to navigate through a channel. Officer Foell met with the owners of the vessel who stated the subject had no permission to be on or operate the vessel. The damage was estimated at approximately \$8000. The subject was booked into the Monroe County Detention Facility on felony charges of criminal mischief and grand theft.

Officers Conrad, Garcia, and Petru were on patrol on the waters around Tavernier. They stopped a vessel based on a BOLO from another FWC officer regarding reckless boating at the Whale Harbor Sandbar. As the officers approached the vessel, the operator motored erratically toward a dock and began throwing lobster from a cooler onto the dock. Upon inspection, the operator showed signs of impairment and was given Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks by Officer Conrad which he performed poorly. The subject was placed under arrest for Boating Under the Influence. Upon inspection of the cooler, the subject had in his possession 61 spiny Lobster, 56 of which were undersized. He also possessed an out of season, whole condition, undersized stone crab. While investigating these violations, another vessel arrived with the intent of towing the first individual's vessel back to dock. The operator of the second vessel

showed signs of impairment. Officer Petru conducted Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks, which the operator performed poorly. Officer Petru placed the operator of the second vessel under arrest for boating under the influence. The first subject provided a breath sample of .137 BAC and refused to provide a second sample. The second subject refused to provide any breath sample. Both subjects were charged accordingly and booked into Plantation Key Jail.

Officer Carroll responded to a call for assistance from MCSO who was in a felony pursuit of an individual who was fleeing a deputy in a truck at approximately 100 MPH. After his vehicle was disabled the subject jumped into the water to elude being caught by the officers. Officer Carroll along with officers from Key Colony Police department, found the subject hiding under a bridge. The subject was brought aboard the FWC vessel and arrested. The subject was turned over to MCSO deputies who charged him with multiple felonies.

Officer Schroth and Lieutenant Lyne were conducting resource inspections at Card Sound. They saw a group of people surrounding a male who appeared to be cutting a large fish. Upon further inspection, it was found that the subject was cleaning a lemon shark which he had caught. He was cited for illegal possession of a lemon shark

Lieutenant Payne saw 2 subjects pull a small vessel from a local boat ramp. They drove onto US1 with no trailer lights, at which point Lieutenant Payne conducted a vehicle stop. As he approached the vehicle he noticed the cooler lid had blown open in the boat and he could see lobster tails in the cooler which appeared small. Officer Rubenstein and Piekenbrock responded to assist with documenting the evidence and questioning. The individuals were found to be in possession of 15 lobster, 8 of which were undersize. The individuals were cited accordingly.

## COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Yurewicz and Knutson saw a person aboard a fishing vessel catching a shark. After the shark had been released, a resource inspection was performed on the vessel. When asked if any other fish had been caught, the vessel operator answered no. During the resource inspection the officers found the operator to be in possession of undersize mangrove snapper. The operator was issued a citation for the violation.

Lieutenant Bulger saw a vehicle concealed near a non-designated trail entrance into Picayune Strand State Forest. Suspecting the subjects were illegally harvesting saw palmetto berries in the state forest, Lieutenant Bulger contacted Officers Reams, Araujo, and Stearns to search within the forest for the subjects. While the officers searched the forest Lieutenant Bulger concealed his patrol truck near the suspect vehicle to observe when the subjects returned. Officer Reams, Araujo, and Stearns encountered 2 subjects in the state forest in possession of harvested saw palmetto berries and a third subject soon returned to the vehicle and admitted to harvesting berries. All three subjects were cited accordingly. A state issued permit is required for

the legal harvest and transport of saw palmetto berries. Also, it is illegal to harvest saw palmetto berries within Picayune Strand State Forest.

Officer Curbelo saw a vehicle off trail exiting a recently closed section of the Picayune Strand State Forest. Upon closer inspection Officer Curbelo saw that the vehicle had become stuck in the mud while attempting to drive around a closed, locked gate. The driver was in violation of operating in a closed area, operating off trail, failure to pay the day use fee, and remaining in the forest after sunset. The driver was cited accordingly.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### MONROE COUNTY

At the request of the private concession owner at John Pennekamp State Park, Officer Mike McKay met with the staff who operate the kayak and paddle board livery in the park to discuss several issues. The first topic was safety equipment regulations, specifically PFD's and sound producing devices when renting out kayaks and stand up paddle boards and the repercussions when in violation of Florida state statutes. The second topic addressed was speeding in state parks and managed properties. The young staff were explained the public safety concerns for both addressed topics. Additionally, Officer McKay explained to the staff the hiring procedures FWC uses and expectations of applicants as several good candidates have been hired from the park concession in the past.

Officers McKay and Trueblood participated in the "Touch A Truck" event held at John Pennekamp State Park in Key Largo. They had their vehicles and an off-shore patrol vessel on display for the participants to check out. The officers explained the unique role that trucks play to aid FWC in fulfilling missions – that differs greatly from those of traditional local and county law enforcement agencies. Attendees of the event included the local fire department, the National Marine Sanctuary, a marine mammal rescue group, DEP Park Service, and a crane company.

### MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officer Washington represented FWC at an awareness event sponsored by the Mystic Force Foundation for their grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony. There was a static display of police cars from all different cities within Miami-Dade County as a show of unity in support of children battling childhood cancer for national childhood cancer awareness month.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### MONROE COUNTY

Three juveniles and one adult male went missing on two PWC's during a storm. They were missing all night as FWC officers and the Coast Guard searched for them in the

waters around Bahia Honda State Park. At approximately 2 am, Investigator Williams and Officer Carroll relieved the day shift and continued the search around Bahia Honda. At first light Captain Dipre and Officer Carroll located the missing subjects who were found near a local key on their sunken PWC's. The juveniles and adult were brought aboard, and after being cleared by medical staff were returned safely to their families. While conducting the boating accident investigation, Officer Carroll discovered that the adult had allowed a 13yr old to drive the PWC resulted in him running aground and sinking one of the PWC's which led to the search. The adult was issued a notice to appear for allowing a juvenile 13 and under to operate a PWC.