

**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report**



*Patrol, Protect, Preserve*

**December 14, 2018 through January 3, 2018**

*This report represents some events the FWC handled over the past two weeks; however, it does not include all actions taken by the Division of Law Enforcement.*

**NORTHWEST REGION**

**CASES**

**ESCAMBIA COUNTY**

Officer Land was conducting resource inspections on the Escambia River. He encountered a group of subjects who were duck hunting. Officer Land began checking each subject's firearm to ensure it was only capable of holding three shells. One of the subjects informed Officer Land that his shotgun did not have a plug in it. Officer Land inspected the firearm and found that it could hold more than three shells. It is not legal to use a firearm capable of holding more than three shells to take migratory birds. The appropriate action was taken for the violation.

Officers Allgood and Jackson located a baited site on Escambia River Wildlife Management area. Officer Allgood continued to monitor the baited site for several days. Officers Allgood and Hutchinson along with K9 Zara saw a boat parked near the baited stand. The officers approached the subject and after a short interview, the subject admitted to placing food attractant in the management area. The subject was issued a resource citation for placing bait in the Wildlife Management Area.

Officer Allgood was on water patrol working duck hunting on the Escambia River. He saw a group of duck hunters and conducted a resource inspection after the hunt was over. During the inspection, Officer Allgood found one of the subject's shotgun was unplugged and could hold more than three shells. Officer Allgood issued the group several citations to include hunting waterfowl with a shotgun capable of holding more than three rounds and multiple license violations.

Officer Allgood was on water patrol on the Escambia River working duck hunting. He conducted a resource inspection on a group of duck hunters. The inspection revealed that a subject had taken four wood ducks using lead shot. Officer Allgood issued a resource citation to the subject for taking ducks with lead shot.

Officer Allgood checked a mullet harvester underneath the Highway 90 Bridge in Milton. During his inspection of his fish and fishing license, Officer Allgood smelled a strong odor of cannabis coming from the subject's bag located next to him. The officer explained he smelled cannabis and asked the man where it was. The man admitted to having cannabis in the bag. During the inspection of the bag, Officer Allgood found cannabis, methamphetamine, a metal pipe with residue in it, another metal pipe and a small digital scale. The subject was placed under arrest and transported and booked in the Santa Rosa Jail.

## ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Cushing was working the Escambia River WMA at location known to be frequented by duck hunters. After legal shooting hours expired, he heard 18 shotgun shots from a group of subjects. Officer Cushing waited until they returned to land and questioned the two subjects about legal waterfowl shooting hours. Both subjects admitted to shooting after hours. In addition, one of the subjects was using an unplugged shotgun. The appropriate state citations were issued.

Officers Cushing and Clark conducted a fisheries inspection of a recreational fishing vessel returning through the Pensacola Pass. Officer Clark discovered several closed season gray triggerfish in the vessel's cooler. Officer Clark documented the state violations accordingly.

## FEDERAL WATERS

Officers Cushing and Clark were on patrol aboard the NW FINCAT in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. During one inspection, Officer Clark discovered two one-gallon bags of reef fish fillets on ice with some skin still attached. Individuals onboard indicated that they were vermillion snapper, grouper and greater amberjack. Reef fish must be landed in whole condition and greater amberjack is currently closed to harvest. The appropriate federal violations were issued.

## CALHOUN COUNTY

Officer Hayes was working night hunting when he saw an SUV driving slowly with a spotlight being shined out of the passenger window illuminating a farm field. He conducted a traffic stop and found two subjects in possession of two .22 caliber rifles. The rear portion of the SUV was also lined with a tarp. Both subjects admitted that they were looking for deer. Both subjects were cited for night hunting and both rifles were seized as evidence.

Officers Hayes, Baber and Gerber were working night hunting when a truck drove by shining a farm field. The officers stopped the truck and found two subjects in possession of a 30-06 rifle. Both subjects were cited for night hunting and the rifle and light were seized as evidence.

Officer Baber was conducting surveillance of farm fields at night when he saw a truck drive slowly by with a light being displayed over the farm field. He conducted a traffic stop and found the truck to be occupied by three subjects. Inside the truck he located two loaded rifles. All three subjects admitted to trying to kill deer. All three were cited for night hunting. Both rifles and the spotlight were seized as evidence.

#### JACKSON COUNTY

Officer Scott was on patrol along a county road when he saw a truck backed up along the side of the roadway. He turned around as the truck pulled away and saw three deer carcasses dumped where the truck had been parked. He initiated a traffic stop and the driver admitted to dumping the carcasses. The subject was cited for dumping in an amount exceeding 15 pounds.

#### FRANKLIN COUNTY

Officers Kossey and Travis were working night hunting in the Tate's Hell Wildlife Management Area. They saw a subject shining a light into the woods. They stopped the subject and found a loaded 12-gauge shotgun in the passenger seat. The subject was cited, and the gun and light seized as evidence.

Officers Swindell and Sauls responded to a complaint of subjects duck hunting in St. George Island State Park. They arrived on scene and watched the subjects shoot multiple times. They contacted the subjects and issued citations for hunting in the State Park and multiple warnings.

#### LEON COUNTY

Officers Korade and Pekerol were on water patrol in Leon County on Lake Iamonia working opening of waterfowl season. They observed three subjects hunting from a permanent blind and contacted them as they were leaving the area. After conducting the investigation, Officers Korade and Pekerol cited all three subjects for hunting from a permanent duck blind on Lake Iamonia.

#### LIBERTY COUNTY

Officer Richardson was on land patrol in Liberty County when he received a call to assist Major Duval with a hunting violation Off Highway 67 in Liberty County. While enroute Officer Richardson heard radio communications between Major Duval and the Tallahassee Regional Communication Center and learned that a subject had taken an

illegal deer. Officer Richardson arrived and saw a group of subjects standing in front of Major Duval's vehicle and a deer in the back of the Major's truck. Major Duval told Officer Richardson that he was holding the subjects until he arrived. Officer Richardson examined the deer and confirmed it was an illegal deer. The deer had two main beams that did not have any forks or splits. Officer Richardson issued the appropriate citation to the subject.

## SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Land witnessed a pickup truck transporting a large quantity of used tires on the highway. The vehicle was not displaying the proper decal to transport more than 25 waste tires. Officer Land conducted a traffic stop to address the violation. There were three individuals in the vehicle. The driver did not possess the required permit to haul more than 25 waste tires, he was driving with a suspended driver's license and he was in possession of drug paraphernalia. The two passengers both had warrants out of Okaloosa County. The appropriate actions were taken to address the violations.

While on patrol during the recent archery season on Eglin WMA, Officer Jones found a baited hunting site. After checking the area for several days without contact with the subject, he seized all hunting equipment at the site as evidence. After an investigation Officer Jones was able to identify the owner of the hunting equipment and was able to file charges for placing bait on a wildlife management area.

Officer Mullins was on water patrol on the Escambia River working duck hunting. He heard several shots that were after the legal hunting hours. The officer located four subjects who admitted to shooting after hours. Upon inspection Officer Mullins discovered one of the subjects with an unplugged shotgun, and another hunting with no valid hunting license. Officer Mullins issued the appropriate citations and warnings.

## WAKULLA COUNTY

Officer Hughes was on water patrol near Goose Creek Bay just east of Live Oak Island. He conducted a resource inspection on three subjects sitting in their duck blind with decoys deployed. After completing the inspection, Officer Hughes addressed their location chosen to hunt. The investigation concluded with Officer Hughes citing two of the subjects for hunting waterfowl in an area of the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge that prohibits this activity.

Officer Gerber received a trespass complaint for Deseret Cattle and Timber property. Fresh blood was found in the middle of the road and drag sign. A trail camera was also stolen nearby. A subject was established and interviewed at a camp. Officer Gerber located a trail camera in the vehicle that did not belong to the subject and a cooler full of fresh deer meat that could not be explained. The subject had recently washed the back of his rental vehicle, but a small spot of deer hair and blood was located. Blood samples were taken from the vehicle and roadway and submitted to the lab for DNA testing. A few days later, the Gulf County Sheriff's Office requested assistance with a subject that

had been arrested and was in possession of two large bucks in the bed of a rental truck. The subject was interviewed by Officer Gerber and Lieutenant Guy. The subject was the same subject from the earlier investigation. He admitted to night hunting the two bucks while trespassing. The subject got his vehicle stuck on private property while trying to gut the deer. He broke into a nearby home and stole multiple firearms and a tractor to get his truck unstuck. When returning to the home to retrieve a set of keys he dropped, the Sheriff's Office was waiting on him after he was spotted by the home owner driving his stolen tractor. During his custodial interrogation, he also admitted to trespassing and night hunting on Deseret property from the previous violation and the deer meat from the cooler was in fact the same deer that produced the blood and hair found in the roadway and the bed of his rental truck. Multiple felony and misdemeanor charges were filed in Bay and Gulf County for armed trespass, night hunting, grand theft, armed burglary and taking wildlife with rim-fire rifle. A rifle and headlamp as well as the deer were seized. The subject was booked into the Gulf County Jail.

## OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Corbin was on land patrol when he received a complaint reference an unregistered vessel being docked at a marina without permission. He met with the dock master and was able to confirm the identity of the owner of the vessel. Officer Corbin located the owner in Fort Walton Beach. When asked, the individual stated he had purchased the sailboat 3 years ago but never titled the vessel in his name. The owner located the vessel title and provided it to the officer. The vessel owner was cited and issued a notice to appear citation for failure to transfer vessel title in his name within 30 days of purchase.

Officer Corbin was on land patrol when he received a complaint from United States Coast Guard Station Destin (USCG) of a sailboat that had sank in Boggy Bayou. The officer located the sailboat and confirmed it was 90 percent submerged with only part of the bow sticking out of the water. The portion of the bow sticking out of the water displayed a Florida registration number. By Florida statute, the sailboat is in derelict condition. Also, it is a navigational hazard. Officer Corbin identified the vessel owner. The vessel owner is residing out of state. The officer was able to secure an arrest warrant.

## WALTON COUNTY

Lieutenant Hollinhead patrolled an area of private property after hearing a rifle shot just after daylight. A subject was later seen at a residence standing at the rear of his truck as if he was preparing to process a deer. The subject acted suspicious when Lieutenant Hollinhead contacted him and stated he had not been hunting although he had deer hair on his coat. When questioned about the deer hair he stated his brother gave him a deer. The deer was in the back of the subject's truck and was a legal buck. Lieutenant Hollinhead left the residence and tracked the subject's vehicle tire sign to private property where he drove his vehicle around a locked gate onto posted private property. An area on the private property was later located where the subject had parked, hunted,

and killed a deer. Once the subject learned what had been located he admitted to killing the deer on the property without permission. The landowner was later contacted and requested that the subject be cited for trespassing due to ongoing trespass problems he has had in the past. Trespass charges will be direct filed.

## **NORTH CENTRAL REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **DUVAL COUNTY**

Officer Gilmore worked with the City of Jacksonville to have two derelict vessels removed from the Ortega River and another one near Mandarin Park.

#### **LEVY COUNTY**

Officer Fox received a complaint of individuals trespassing and dumping wild hog carcasses on private property near Raleigh in Levy County. He spoke with the complainant and visited the complainant's property. The complainant told Officer Fox that he placed numerous game cameras throughout his property to assist in identifying the individuals who were trespassing. Three individuals were identified. Officer Fox contacted the individuals and conducted separate interviews with them. Officer Fox direct filed charges of trespass on the three subjects through the Levy County State Attorney's Office.

Officers Fox and VanNess were conducting water patrol in Yankeetown when they saw a commercial oyster vessel actively harvesting oysters. Officers Fox and VanNess conducted a resource inspection on the vessel and found three of the four subjects onboard were commercially harvesting oysters without a saltwater products license. Approximately 23 percent of their oyster harvest were undersized, and the captain/owner failed to transfer vessel title/registration within the required 30 days. Three subjects were issued misdemeanor citations for commercially harvesting oysters without a saltwater products license. The captain was cited for possession of over five percent undersized oysters, failure to transfer vessel title/registration within 30 days and was also issued a uniform boating citation for the vessel's expired registration. A total of 68 undersized oysters were seized and returned to the water alive.

During an annual deer-dog hunt in Goethe Wildlife Management Area, Officers Bell, Drew, Fox, Hilliard, and Willis issued seven written warnings, seven infractions, and two misdemeanor citations. Violations included no quota permit, driving on closed roads, no management area permit, and hunting after hours. Over 100 users were checked during the detail.

Officers Bell, Hilliard and Willis were patrolling in Goethe State Forest when they noticed a vehicle heading in their direction. The vehicle was approximately 300 yards

away when it came around a curve in the road and the headlights illuminated the FWC officers' trucks. The subject driving the vehicle quickly turned around and proceeded back in the direction from which they came. The officers followed the subjects and performed a vehicle stop for being in Goethe State Forest after legal entry hours. The driver and passenger of the vehicle admitted that they were hog hunting. Both individuals received a misdemeanor notice to appear for hunting after legal hours and each received a warning for being in Goethe State Forest after hours.

## COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer Burnsed located a parked vehicle on a closed road in Osceola National Forest. He located a subject returning to the vehicle, addressed the violation, and the subject left the area. Officer Burnsed located a bait site a short distance away from where the vehicle was parked. He located and interviewed the subject who admitted to placing the bait. Charges will be filed with the State Attorney's Office.

Officers Yates and Fanelli were patrolling the Osceola Wildlife Management Area targeting illegal night hunting in the early morning hours of Christmas Day. Officer Yates noticed a vehicle traveling slowly and using its headlights to illuminate the wooded areas. He maintained surveillance from a distance for several minutes while the vehicle continued to shine in the wooded area. After stopping the vehicle, Officer Yates saw the driver quickly exit the vehicle and attempt to exchange seats with the passenger. Officer Fanelli quickly responded and assisted with the investigation. The driver was operating the vehicle on a suspended driver's license. During questioning, the subjects admitted to attempting to take deer at night with the use of a gun and light. Two loaded rifles were seized as evidence and the subjects were cited for attempting to take deer by gun and light.

## CLAY COUNTY

Officers Barber, Barber and Lieutenant Haney followed up on an anonymous tip that a black bear had been killed in a Middleburg neighborhood. During their investigation, they located the kill site and a subject. During an interview, the subject confessed to killing the large female black bear while he was trespassing on private property deer hunting. The bear meat and rifle were seized as evidence. The subject is being cited for taking a Florida black bear, use of full metal jacket ammunition, trespass during take of an animal, no hunting license and no deer permit.

Officer Bryan and Investigator Izsak were working Camp Blanding WMA when a subject reported an illegal bait site to the check station. The officers located the bait site and a subject actively hunting over bait. The subject was cited for the violation and the subject who reported the violation will be receiving a Wildlife Alert Reward.

Officer Bryan was on land patrol and located a large amount of trash that was dumped on a local hunting club property and the roadway right of way. Officer Bryan identified

the subjects, and they confessed to the illegal littering. The subjects were cited for the violation and agreed to remove the garbage.

## **BAKER COUNTY**

Officers Burnsed, Yates and K9 Officer Gill received a complaint from a subject that heard several shots from neighboring property and soon noticed a severely injured doe yearling come by his location. Officer Gill deployed K9 Friar and located the doe. They followed the track to the neighboring property and located where the doe was shot. The officers determined the shooter had left the property before their arrival. They collected evidence and identified the shooter. After interviewing the shooter, it was determined he shot the doe deer. Charges will be filed with the State Attorney's Office.

## **TAYLOR COUNTY**

Officers Smith and Albritton were working night hunting when they saw a vehicle traveling west on Highway 98 toward their location. The vehicle stopped, and the officers heard a gunshot. They approached the vehicle and found two adults and two juveniles inside. The officers located a dead doe deer in the bed of the truck and four firearms inside the vehicle. The officers seized the firearms and deer as evidence and transported the two adults to the Taylor County Jail. At the jail, the two subjects were charged and booked on the appropriate criminal violations.

Officers Dasher and Sheffield were on water patrol in the Steinhatchee River, focusing on illegal offshore fishing, when the officers saw a boat returning from offshore. They conducted a resource and boating safety inspection. The subject admitted to having red snapper and gag grouper fillets in a cooler in the front of the vessel. The officers located the cooler and found a bag with 14 red snapper fillets and 14 gag grouper fillets. The officers seized the fillets and Officer Dasher will be filing multiple charges for the violations.

## **HAMILTON COUNTY**

Officer Nichols responded to a call from the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office regarding illegal hunting. Deputies located freshly cleaned deer meat in a bucket of ice at a residence while investigating a trespass complaint. Officer Nichols met with subjects at the residence and was able to obtain a confession from one for taking an antlerless deer during closed season. Fresh deer meat, an antlerless deer carcass, and a rifle were seized as evidence. The subject will be cited for multiple violations of taking antlerless deer during the closed season.

## **NORTHEAST REGION**

### **CASES**

## BREVARD COUNTY

While patrolling Port Canaveral Officer Hallsten contacted a vessel for a resource inspection. As he approached, one of the subjects ran back to the boat that was at the dock and started throwing fish back into the water. Officer Hallsten announced his presence but the subject continued to throw fish overboard. A fisheries inspection was completed, and it was found that the subjects were over their vessel limit of mullet. Citations were issued for interference with an FWC officer and over the vessel limit on mullet.

While conducting resource inspections on duck hunters on Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge at Shiloh 3, Officer Eller spoke with several subjects who stated that a group of subjects were hunting the previous morning on a closed hunting day. Further information was gathered that a group matching their description was also hunting on this day. Officer Eller located the group of subjects and conducted a resource inspection. It was revealed that the subjects were actively hunting a limited entry quota hunting zone without a quota. Further inspection revealed that one of the subjects had never purchased a Federal Duck Stamp. The subjects were cited accordingly with both state and federal citations.

Officer Eller was at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge conducting resource inspections on waterfowl hunters. He saw a green Gheenoe returning to the Shiloh 3 boat ramp and recognized the operator as an individual who had been cited for bag limit violations on the refuge previously. Officer Eller asked to see the ducks harvested by the subject. The subject began to dig to the bottom of the large pile of decoys he had on the bow of his boat and pulled out two canvasbacks and two redheads. Officer Eller noticed that the subject was digging through the decoys as if he was trying to conceal something. While pulling out the two redheads Officer Eller noticed what appeared to be a third redhead protruding from the bottom of the decoy pile. Officer Eller began to dig through the decoy pile himself and found at the bottom of the pile wrapped in camo burlap two more drake redheads. This put the subject over his bag limit in redhead ducks. A further inspection revealed that the subject also was illegally hunting the area without a quota permit. The subject was cited accordingly with both state and federal citations.

Officers Hallsten, Humphrey and Balgo received intelligence about a commercial king fishing vessel making a second trip after catching the daily commercial limit for the day out of Port Canaveral. The officers located the fishing vessel returning from a second trip and conducted a resource inspection. The inspection revealed that the subject was in possession of 24 kingfish that were caught on the second trip. The investigation revealed that the trip ticket from the first trip showed 50 kingfish were landed at the wholesaler. A recorded statement was taken, evidence documented, and the fish were sold. A federal citation was filed with NOAA Fisheries about over the commercial daily bag limit of 50 kingfish.

## INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Officer Delano was on patrol in the town of Sebastian when he saw a man holding a large snook. The man was posing for a photograph next to the town park Christmas tree as Officer Delano approached. A resource inspection revealed the man was in possession of one over the slot size snook, no fishing license, and no snook stamp. A notice to appear was issued for the violations.

Officer Kearney conducted an inspection of a local fish house. During his inspection, he discovered four kingfish that did not have proper documentation. Commercial fish houses are required to keep proper documentation of all resource on their premises. A notice to appear was issued for failure to have proper documentation.

While on patrol, Officer Delano saw a vessel violating a slow speed zone near a boat ramp. Officer Delano approached the vessel to address the violation. While speaking to the men, they explained they had fishing line wrapped around their propeller and were just trying to make it back to the ramp. The officer saw fishing equipment on board and asked if they had any fish on the vessel. A resource inspection revealed the men were in possession of two over the slot size snook. Citations were issued for the offenses.

#### FLAGLER COUNTY

Officer Greenier was on land patrol adjacent to the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) when he saw two subjects in a small commercial skiff cast netting black mullet in the canal system just north of the State Road 100 bridge in Flagler Beach. Officer Greenier contacted the men and conducted a commercial fisheries inspection. During the inspection, Officer Greenier found three undersized snook in the vessel's fish box. He issued the vessel captain a citation for possessing undersized snook and possessing over the daily recreational bag limit of snook. He also issued the captain a written warning for harvesting snook by unlawful/prohibited method (cast net).

#### ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Officer Miller was on evening water patrol near Porpoise Point at St. Augustine Inlet when he saw a vessel running on plane with no navigation lights. He stopped the vessel and during the safety equipment inspection saw several signs of impairment from the operator. Officer Miller conducted the seated battery of field sobriety tasks at the nearby Vilano Pier floating dock and determined the man was boating under the influence (BUI). Officer Ramsey arrived by land to assist Officer Miller, as the boater became belligerent and violent following the sobriety tasks. The boater kicked Officer Ramsey and repeatedly resisted the officers' attempts to have him sit still. Officer Ramsey transported the boater to the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office Jail where his breath alcohol content was determined to be .140. Officer Miller booked the man into the jail for BUI, battery on a law enforcement officer, and resisting a law enforcement officer with violence. He also issued the man a uniform boating citation for failing to display navigation lights.

## VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer Thornton was on patrol in the Lake Monroe Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Upon entering the parking lot of the WMA Officer Thornton saw a large amount of household garbage littering the parking area. A closer inspection of the garbage showed that seven large plastic bags filled with trash, children's toys, television/computer monitor, clothes, and miscellaneous electronics were dumped. A subsequent search of one of the trash bags revealed identifying information of a subject. After an extensive investigation, Officer Thornton conducted an interview of the subject and developed probable cause for an arrest, charging the subject for dumping an amount exceeding 15 pounds in weight, but not exceeding 500 pounds in weight.

Officer Pelzel conducted fisheries enforcement in the New Smyrna Beach area. An adult male was issued a criminal notice to appear citation after leaving the south jetty with more than his legal daily bag limit of bluefish. On another night, Officer Pelzel stopped an adult male leaving the north jetty and issued him a criminal notice to appear citation for possessing an over the slot size red drum (redfish). Later that same night at a relief bridge, two adult males were found to be in possession of under the legal-size limit of mangrove snapper and sheepshead. Both were issued criminal notice to appear citations.

Officer Edson was on patrol in the Tiger Bay Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when he saw a suspicious vehicle parked behind a cellphone tower directly across from the entrance to the WMA. As he turned around, the vehicle left the area and pulled out onto a major highway. Officer Edson followed, and the vehicle pulled off onto the shoulder of the highway. He approached the vehicle to do a well-being check on the occupants. A white male was driving, and a white female appeared passed out on the passenger seat. The driver stated, "I wasn't driving." A computer check revealed his license was suspended. He and the vehicle owner/female passenger gave Officer Edson permission to search the vehicle. During the search Officer Edson found several bags of methamphetamine, drug paraphernalia, several bags of individually packaged Alprazolam pills, a prescription bottle of Alprazolam, empty baggies, a digital scale and a large amount of cash wrapped in eight separate bundles. Both subjects were arrested on various drug charges including possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia, and possession of a controlled substance with the intent to distribute.

## SUMTER COUNTY

Officer Scrambling was on patrol at the Lake Deaton Boat Ramp when he conducted a boating safety and resource inspection on a vessel containing two individuals. The inspection revealed 10 black bass on board, four of which were over the 16-inch maximum size limit. One of the individuals was cited appropriately for the oversized bass and received a warning for not having the proper safety equipment on board his vessel.

## MARION COUNTY

Officer Dias was on patrol in Ocala Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Church Lake Unit an hour and a half past dark when he heard shots fired. As he neared the area of the shots, he saw a vehicle down a closed road. He contacted the vehicle that was occupied by an adult male driver. The man was wearing hip waders and a hunting vest. When Officer Dias asked what he was doing, the subject replied, "Coon hunting," and showed Officer Dias his dog, a 20-gauge pump action shotgun, and a spotlight. Officer Dias asked where the raccoon was that he shot, the man replied that he left it in the woods. The subject volunteered to take Officer Dias back to the kill site where the dead raccoon, three spent shell casings, and one live round that fell from the subject's vest were located. The subject admitted being a highly experienced raccoon hunter. Florida law requires that raccoons only be taken at night with use of a single shot .410 shotgun. Officer Dias issued the subject a notice to appear for hunting raccoons with an unauthorized firearm, and two warnings for driving on a closed road and willful/wanton waste of wildlife.

## **SOUTHWEST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **HERNANDO COUNTY**

Lieutenant Grover responded to a gopher tortoise complaint about a man clearing a lot. The subject was found to have destroyed/disturbed gopher tortoise burrows that had been documented from a previous response to that address and he did not have any permits. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officer Specialist Balfour received a call from a landowner about some individuals that were shining lights on his property late at night. The landowner also reported that he had heard a gunshot. Officer Balfour located a freshly killed buck on the landowner's property. He backed off to conduct hidden surveillance of the area where the buck was killed and saw an individual enter the property to retrieve the buck. Officer Balfour identified himself and the man started to run away. After a brief foot chase Officer Balfour caught the subject and took him into custody. The subject was cited for trespass, taking deer after hours, wearing a mask on a public roadway, and resisting arrest. Further charges will be filed with the Office of the State Attorney.

#### **HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY**

While on patrol at Simmons Park, Officer Rorer conducted a fisheries inspection on two individuals fishing from shore. During her inspection, she discovered one of the individuals to be in possession of an undersized redfish during the closed season. The individual was cited accordingly.

While on patrol at Simmons Park, Officer Rivard conducted a fisheries inspection on a vessel returning to the boat ramp. During his inspection, he discovered the person onboard to be in possession of eight undersized sheepshead. The individual was cited for the violation.

While on patrol at a public boat ramp located near the Hillsborough County Civic Center, Officer Rivard saw an ATV pull into the parking lot of the center. The civic center was hosting a holiday event for young children that evening and there were several families with young kids walking in the parking lot towards the door to enter the event. Officer Rivard saw the operator of the ATV stop in front of the entrance to the building, then speed up aggressively and maneuver the ATV into circle at a rate of speed where the tires of the ATV lost traction and began to skid. This maneuver was done near several pedestrians and parked vehicles. Officer Rivard stopped the individual on the ATV and cited him for reckless operation of a vehicle with a willful and wanton disregard for the safety of pedestrians in the area.

While on patrol at a boat ramp on the Alafia River, Officer Rivard conducted several boating safety inspections. During one of his inspections, he discovered a blue crab trap on one of the vessels. A closer inspection of the trap revealed it was a commercially registered blue crab trap. The operator and occupant of the vessel indicated the trap did not belong to them. The trap owner was contacted, and he advised he had not given permission to anyone to pull his traps. The trap was seized as evidence. Charges for blue crab trap theft and molestation of commercial fishing gear are being filed with the State Attorney's Office.

While on water patrol in Old Tampa Bay, Officer Specialist Phillippi and Lieutenant Van Trees saw two subjects spearfishing around a bridge. The officers made contact with the two divers and asked them to return to their vessel so that a resource inspection could be conducted. While swimming to their vessel Lieutenant Van Trees told the men not to reach down into the water and to put their fish on the vessel. One subject complied and threw a catch ring with numerous fish on it immediately onto the vessel. The second subject could be seen manipulating something underneath the water. The subject was instructed to throw his fish on the vessel immediately and then get onboard the vessel. The subject continued to ignore the instructions given and only after a third command to get on the vessel did the subject comply. The subject threw his catch ring with numerous fish on the vessel and, as he did, the officers noticed a sheepshead floating away. A resource inspection revealed that the subject was over the daily bag limit of sheepshead and had an undersized sheepshead. The subject was also cited for interference with a FWC officer.

While on water patrol in Tampa Bay, Lieutenant Van Trees stopped a vessel to conduct a boating safety inspection. During the inspection Lieutenant Van Trees saw numerous signs of impairment from the operator and asked the subject to complete seated field sobriety tasks. After the tasks were completed, Lieutenant Van Trees arrested the subject for boating under the influence. Officer Wilkins and Officer Lamoureux arrived to transport the subject to the Tampa FWC Office where Officer Wilkins administered a

breath test. The subject gave a breath sample of .12 and was booked into the Hillsborough County Jail for BUI.

## LEE COUNTY

Officer Garcia and Officer Thompson were on patrol when they noticed some individuals walking back to their truck from a seawall carrying a fish. Officer Garcia recognized the fish as a snook which is closed to harvest at this time. By the time the officers turned around and contacted the subject, they had already loaded their gear into the truck. Officer Garcia examined the outside of the pickup truck and noticed a tool box in plain view in the bed of the truck. The box was cracked open and the outside had fresh blood and fish scales on it. When the owner of the truck was interviewed again, he admitted there was a fish in the box and pulled out a snook which had several small holes in its head and body. After further questioning, this subject removed a homemade fish gig from the truck box. Snook are only allowed to be taken by hook and line. The individual who had been in possession of the fish was issued a notice to appear for the violations.

Officer Winton was on patrol in Matanzas Pass when he saw a vessel being operated without the required navigation lights. A vessel stop was conducted, at which time the operator exhibited signs of impairment. Field sobriety tasks were conducted by Officer Winton and the operator was placed under arrest for boating under the influence (B.U.I.). The subject refused to provide a breath sample and was booked into the Lee County Jail.

Officer Winton was on patrol in Matanzas Pass when he stopped a vessel for failing to display a valid registration. During the stop, it was determined that the owner had purchased the vessel almost one year prior but had never transferred the title or registration. The owner was issued a notice to appear for failure to transfer title within thirty days of purchase, and warnings for other related registration violations.

Officer Winton was on patrol in Estero Bay when he stopped a vessel for a registration violation. During the inspection, it was determined that the vessel's operator had purchased the vessel several months prior and had failed to transfer the title/registration. It was also discovered that the operator had been previously warned by FWC about transferring his title within thirty days of purchase. The operator was issued a notice to appear for failure to transfer vessel title, a boating citation for inadequate number of life jackets, and warnings for additional registration and safety violations.

Officer Winton responded to a boating accident that had occurred in Matanzas Pass and had been witnessed by a United States Coast Guard team on a USCG patrol vessel. Officer Winton arrived on-scene to take over the investigation, at which time he noticed that the vessel's operator exhibited signs of impairment. After performing poorly on the field sobriety tasks, the operator was placed under arrest for boating under the influence. At the jail, the subject refused to provide a breath sample. A follow-up investigation determined that the unoccupied sailboat the subject had struck had

sustained damages. The subject was cited for boating under the influence, BUI property damage and refusal to provide a breath sample.

Officer Winton was on vessel patrol in San Carlos Bay when he saw a fishing vessel returning upriver. Officer Winton stopped the vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection, at which time it was determined that the subjects were in possession of an undersized redfish. Additionally, the harvest of redfish is currently closed due to the recent red tide events. The responsible subject was identified and was issued a notice to appear for possession of undersized redfish, as well as a warning for violation of FWC Executive Orders pertaining to redfish closures.

Officer Winton and Lieutenant Spoede were on vessel patrol near the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River when they saw a vessel being operated with an expired Florida registration decal. During the vessel stop, the officers noticed that the operator exhibited signs of impairment. After performing poorly on field sobriety tasks, the operator was placed under arrest for boating under the influence. At the jail, the operator provided breath samples of .200g/210L and .196g/210L.

Officer Winton and Lieutenant Spoede were on vessel patrol near Tarpon Point, when they saw an offshore fishing vessel returning upriver. The officers stopped the vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection, and an undersized African pompano was discovered onboard. The captain of the vessel took responsibility for keeping the fish and was issued a notice to appear for the violation.

Officer Winton was on vessel patrol near Shell Island when he stopped a vessel to conduct a boater safety inspection. During the inspection, Officer Winton noticed that the operator exhibited signs of impairment. The operator performed poorly on field sobriety tasks and was placed under arrest for boating under the influence. At the jail, the operator provided breath samples of .116g/210L and .114g/210L.

## MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Gonzales was on land patrol around the South Skyway Bridge Rest Area. He stopped and performed a fisheries inspection on a man fishing from the relief bridge near the rest area. During his inspection, he discovered that the subject had caught and kept ten undersized mangrove (gray) snapper. He cited the man criminally for possession of undersized and over the bag limit mangrove snapper. The subject will have to appear in court for his violations.

Officer Dalton was on land patrol around Robinson's Preserve. He checked a subject returning from a day of fishing inside the preserve and found that the subject had caught and kept three undersized red drum and two undersized black drum. Officer Dalton cited the subject criminally for possession of undersized red drum and wrote him warnings for the undersized black drum. The subject will have to appear in court for his violations.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer Specialist Bibeau saw an individual actively wade fishing. He waited for the individual to finish fishing and start packing up his belongings prior to making contact with him to conduct a fisheries inspection. Officer Specialist Bibeau found the individual to be in possession of a sixteen-inch redfish. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for possession of an undersized redfish and a warning for violation of the executive order pertaining to redfish.

While on patrol at the Fort Desoto boat ramp, Officer LaRosa conducted a fisheries inspection on a vessel returning to the ramp. Through the course of her inspection, she discovered the individual aboard the vessel to be in possession of two undersize gray triggerfish during the closed season. The harvest of triggerfish is closed in the gulf from the end of September through the end of February. The individual was cited for the violations.

Officer Pettifer and Officer Martinez saw an individual cleaning fish at a local marina. Upon inspecting the fish, the officers discovered the person to be in possession of an undersized triggerfish during the closed season. The individual was cited for possession of a trigger fish during a closed season.

Officer Angelis and Officer Petru were on water patrol in the Anclote River. They saw a vessel with a lot of fishing gear. They stopped the vessel to conduct a resource inspection. During the inspection, they found several red drum that were harvested during the special closure and the fish were also not of legal size. Officer Petru seized the fish as evidence and the appropriate citations were issued to the harvester.

While on land patrol, Officer Specialist Bibeau saw an individual actively fishing from the shoreline. He watched as the individual caught two fish and placed both in a small bait bucket. As the individual was preparing to leave the area, Officer Specialist Bibeau made contact to conduct a fisheries inspection. He located seven seatrout, two of which were undersized and wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for being over the daily bag limit of seatrout and a warning for undersized seatrout.

While on offshore water patrol, Officer Specialist Bibeau stopped a vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection. The individuals onboard the vessel advised that they had caught hogfish and mangrove snapper. Officer Specialist Bibeau boarded the vessel and located a triggerfish at the bottom of a cooler. One of the individuals onboard the vessel admitted to catching the triggerfish and advised that he forgot the fish was in the cooler. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for harvest of triggerfish during closed season.

While on land patrol, Officer Specialist Bibeau saw three individuals actively fishing from underneath a bridge. He conducted a fisheries inspection and located three undersized sheepshead and an extremely small gag grouper hidden in a towel. Officer Specialist Bibeau read the individuals their Miranda rights and, after a series of questions, one

individual admitted to catching the fish. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the individual misdemeanor citations for possession of undersized and out of season gag grouper along with a warning for undersized sheepshead.

## PASCO COUNTY

Officer Specialist Balfour and Officer Rothchild were on land patrol in the Hudson area when they noticed a vehicle parked on a piece of private property. From a previous engagement, the officers knew that the individual was involved in hunting deer. They conducted an inspection of the subject and discovered that he was hunting over a feeding station that had not been maintained. Officer Rothchild issued a citation for the violation.

## HARDEE COUNTY

Officer Franks and Officer Karr were on night patrol when they witnessed someone driving a vehicle slowly near their location. Both officers saw someone shine a spotlight out of the passenger window in a manner capable of disclosing wildlife in the area. The operator of the vehicle turned around and the officers saw the spotlight shine out of both the driver's and the passenger's side of the truck. Officer Karr conducted a vehicle stop and discovered a scoped rifle and spotlight between the driver's and passenger's seat of the vehicle. The driver and passenger were both cited for taking deer with a gun and light. Additional felony trespass charges are pending. The rifle and spotlight were seized as evidence.

Officer Kobs saw a vehicle with a bright light shining out of the driver's side window. Officer Kobs followed the vehicle as the driver continued to shine the spotlight in a manner capable of disclosing deer on the side of the road. The driver stopped, backed up, and continued to drive slowly down the rural road. Officer Kobs conducted a traffic stop and found a scoped rifle and spotlight next to the driver of the vehicle. The driver was cited for hunting off the roadway and taking deer with a gun and light. The driver's rifle and spotlight were seized as evidence.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### HERNANDO COUNTY

Officers set up a directed conservation patrol in an area where complaints had been recently received of deer being taken at night. They saw a vehicle slowly passing by a field and someone inside the vehicle was actively working a light. As the vehicle passed the field, it turned around and headed back to work the opposite side of the road. The officers stopped the vehicle, and the passenger had a rifle with light mounted to it in his lap. A search of the vehicle revealed the subject had ejected a round from the chamber, as well as hidden the magazine in a binocular case on the floor. The subject was cited accordingly, and the rifle was seized as evidence.

## PASCO COUNTY

Investigator Williams and Lieutenant Parisoe were conducting a directed conservation patrol by surveillance of subject in the Green Key area. This is a known "bank fishing" location. During their surveillance, the officers saw numerous users fishing from both the shore and a vessel. One group of subjects was seen harvesting small fish. When the subjects left the area, Investigator Williams stopped their vehicle to perform an inspection. Officer Angelis, Officer Petru, and Lieutenant Parisoe assisted with the inspection. The subjects were in possession of several undersized red drum, undersized black drum, undersized sheepshead, and undersized mangrove snapper. Officer Petru seized the fish as evidence and issued the appropriate citations and warnings for the violations.

## CHARLOTTE / LEE COUNTY

Officers worked a directed conservation patrol targeting illegal commercial mullet netting. A total of seven individuals were cited for a combination of quality control issues and seine net violations. In total, the officers seized three seine nets, over 1100 pounds of mullet and assorted fish and issued eleven citations.

A directed conservation patrol effort by officers in areas of the Yucca Pens WMA prevented violations which had been ongoing in the area. Officers proactively patrolled the WMA and remained available to respond to areas that have been frequented by ATV's. Eleven officers and two lieutenants worked approximately 163 hours in the WMA during its peak activity times. FWC K-9 units and aviation personnel also assisted in the detail. There was activity outside of the WMA on both days of the detail and several potential subject groups approached the boundary lines to enter the WMA; but the fences were repaired, and they could not enter without illegally cutting the fences. One of the groups were overheard talking about cutting the fences, but they left and did not return to the area. No fences were cut during the nights of the enforced detail.

## HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

While working a directed conservation patrol in the form of a planned night hunting detail, Officer Rorer, Officer Guerin and Lieutenant Laskowski saw a vehicle traveling at a slow rate of speed on a rural road. One of the occupants of the vehicle was using a light to illuminate orange groves and fields in a manner capable of disclosing the presence of wildlife. Upon conducting a resource inspection, the officers located two loaded .22 caliber rifles in the truck along with a flashlight. After being read their Miranda rights, the individuals admitted to shining the light along the road to look for hogs and deer. They were cited for attempting to take wildlife from a public roadway with the use of a gun and light.

While working a directed conservation patrol in the form of a planned night hunting detail, Officer Rorer, Officer Guerin and Lieutenant Laskowski saw a truck with dog boxes traveling at a slow rate of speed. The officers saw an occupant in the vehicle

illuminating fields and orange groves in a manner capable of disclosing the presence of wildlife. Upon stopping the driver of the truck and conducting a resource inspection, the officers saw four dogs in the dog box. The dogs were breeds commonly used for hunting hogs. The dogs were wearing active GPS collars and the driver of the vehicle was in possession of a hand-held GPS unit turned on and linked to the dog collars. One of the dogs was wearing a Kevlar vest and collar used to protect them from injury while hunting hogs. The individuals in the truck were cited for attempting to take wildlife with dogs from a public roadway.

## **SARASOTA COUNTY**

Officer Brown was on land patrol in North Port working a directed conservation patrol. While on patrol, he was focusing his enforcement effort on an uninhabited piece of land that has been frequented by people illegally dumping trash and other debris. He noticed a truck enter the property with several large pieces of furniture in the bed. He followed the men driving the truck and saw them get out and dump the furniture on the property then drive off. Officer Brown stopped the men and they confessed to illegally dumping the furniture. Officer Brown charged the men criminally for dumping under the Florida Litter Law and they will have to appear in court for their violations.

## **SOUTH REGION A**

### **CASES**

#### **BROWARD COUNTY**

While on water patrol, K-9 Officer Wright and Officer Nall saw a vessel operating too fast in an idle speed manatee zone and conducted a stop on the vessel. They saw fishing equipment on board the vessel and fresh evidence of fish on the boat. A marine fisheries inspection revealed the subject was in possession of 9 king mackerel. The daily limit of king mackerel is 2 per harvester. The subject was issued a criminal citation for over the bag limit of king mackerel and the 7 fish that were over the bag limit were seized and submitted into evidence.

Officer Seldomridge conducted a marine fisheries inspection on a subject that was in the water at Commercial Blvd and Bayview Dr. The subject had 19 speared sheepshead on a stringer. The subject was issued a misdemeanor notice to appear for possession of over the bag limit of sheepshead.

#### **MARTIN COUNTY**

Officer Kirkland received a complaint about a developer that had cleared a section of property with gopher tortoise burrows on site without a permit. She responded and found the perimeter cleared and three potentially active burrows on the property. She contacted the county's Growth Management Department and was provided with the

environmental survey. The survey supplied a map of the property showing five active burrows along the perimeter and clearly stated that a gopher tortoise Permit would be required. A 28-day halt of developmental activities was placed on the property to allow any tortoises to self-excavate. At the end of the 28 days no tortoises had self-excavated and the owner/developer was issued a misdemeanor citation for failing to obtain a gopher tortoise permit.

Officer Hudson was dispatched to a call about a subject shooting a deer in the Dupuis WMA. Officer Hudson was able to locate the tree stand that the deer had been shot from, found drag marks from in front of the stand with blood heading deeper into the swamp, and found a doe tucked into the brush. The deer had the backstrap removed and the rest of the meat left on the deer. Officer Hudson removed DNA samples from the deer and photographed the tree stand on the tree. Officer Hudson was conducting resource inspections at the check station when he saw the tree stand he had photographed in the bed of a truck. He inspected the subjects backpack and found bags which had blood on them. Officer Carroll arrived, and the officers were able to locate two broadheads which had deer blood and mud on them. The broadheads matched the subjects broadheads he had on his bow. Officer Hudson got the bloody bags and broadheads DNA tested, to which the DNA matched the deer that was left in the woods. The subject was charged for failure to checkout deer, and for willful & wanton waste of wildlife.

Officer Hudson was patrolling Hobe Sound Beach when an individual approached and told him that a subject wearing red shorts and a red hat had an undersized snook in his cooler. Officer Hudson contacted the subjects and they stated they had only caught bluefish. Upon inspection of the cooler, Officer Hudson found a 20-inch snook that was covered completely in sand at the bottom of their cooler underneath approximately 15 bluefish. The subject admitted to catching the snook and received notice to appear citations for, possession of out of season snook, undersized snook, and no snook stamp.

Officer Hudson was conducting fisheries inspections at the Stuart Causeway. Upon inspection of a subject the officer asked if he had any luck today. The subject responded that all the fish he had was in one cooler in the bed of his truck. The fish inside the cooler were legal, but inspection of a bucket revealed an undersized permit. The subject was given a notice to appear citation for possession of undersized permit.

## PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Langley received a call from dispatch stating that an employee at a watersports rental company was renting personal watercraft (PWC's) to people who did not possess boating safety identification cards. After arriving on scene, Officer Langley saw two subjects on separate PWC's returning to the rental location. Both subjects were born after January 1, 1988 and did not have boating safety cards. The operator of the company was cited accordingly.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Stone, Trawinski, Riggs and Ames worked an outreach event at Crestwood Middle School. The officers spoke to 60 middle school kids regarding the core missions of FWC. Students were educated on the importance of fishery/wildlife regulations and how conservation law enforcement is incorporated into the effort.

Lieutenant Haworth gave several presentations at a school in Jupiter. He brought an alligator, 2 snakes and a box turtle. He discussed the duties of an FWC officer, showed and discussed the wildlife he had brought and answered dozens of questions from 350 students.

### **SOUTH REGION B**

#### CASES

##### MIAMI DADE COUNTY

While checking vessels returning to Matheson Hammock boat ramp, Officer Dunn saw a small white center console returning to the dock with only an all-around white mast light displayed. Officer Dunn found the vessel was returning from a day of spearfishing in the Bahamas. Upon conducting a saltwater resource inspection, he found a speared Nassau grouper and two speared hogfish (undersize, out of season, over bag limit). One of the vessel occupants claimed possession of the three fish and was cited accordingly.

Officer Hernandez was on water patrol in Biscayne Bay when he stopped a fishing boat. During the recreational resource inspection, he discovered 18 bags of wahoo without skin attached. The vessel was returning from the Bahamas. The operator was cited accordingly.

Officer McKinley and Officer Hedgepeth stopped a vessel in the ICW south of 79th street bridge. Upon conducting a fisheries inspection, he found the operator to be in possession of one undersized sailfish and one undersized cobia. Appropriate citations were issued.

Officer Hernandez saw three persons on a seawall at Cape Florida State Park. He watched them for a while and conducted a fisheries inspection. The inspection revealed 57 lobsters. Appropriate citations were issued.

Officer Hernandez stopped three individuals on Moody canal with 4 undersized redfish and 1 over the bag limit. Two misdemeanor citations were issued to each subject for the violations.

## COLLIER COUNTY

While on a Dry Tortugas patrol, crew onboard FWC offshore patrol vessel CT Randall received information of a vessel returning to Key West with commercial quantities of reef fish without the required federal commercial permit. FWC Officers Richards, Foell, Hettel and NOAA/NMFS Officer Robb gathered further information on the vessel and awaited dockside. Upon arrival, the officers conducted a marine fisheries inspection. Four male subjects were onboard the vessel claiming to be on a commercial spearfishing trip from South Atlantic federal waters. A total of 560 pounds of snapper-grouper species were located onboard. The vessel did not have a valid NOAA South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper commercial permit. The snapper-grouper species were seized by the National Marine Fisheries Service and sold after bid. The operator of the vessel was issued a federal citation.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### MONROE COUNTY

Officer Cobb, Officer Alvarez, and Officer Powell conducted a Targeted Enforcement Action for the Key Deer Zone in Big Pine Key. During the detail, the officers completed numerous vehicle stops resulting in one misdemeanor, three infractions, five warnings, and one motorcycle towed.