

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



*Patrol, Protect, Preserve*

**March 22, 2019 through April 4, 2019**

*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 Clark was dispatched to meet with the U.S. Marshall Service and multiple other agencies at a residence in Pensacola while they were conducting a search warrant. Upon arrival, he discovered a juvenile alligator snapping turtle that was in the garage in a glass tank. After interviewing the suspects in custody, they admitted that they had found the turtle in the road one week earlier and put it in the glass tank. The turtle was seized, and both suspects were issued citations for possession of alligator snapping turtle.

**BAY COUNTY**

Officer Hellett was traveling southbound on Thomas Drive when he noticed a vehicle stopped in the left southbound lane. He pulled up behind the vehicle where it continued to remain stopped in the left lane. At this time, another vehicle pulled up in the right lane beside the stopped vehicle and honked its horn. The vehicle in the left lane started to move. Officer Hellett followed the vehicle to an intersection where the traffic light was red. The vehicle pulled up to the intersection, stopped, then proceeded to turn left violating the red traffic signal. Upon stopping the vehicle and conducting field sobriety tasks, it was determined that the operator was impaired. The operator was cited for operating a motor vehicle with his normal faculties being impaired and was booked into the Bay County Jail.

## CALHOUN/JACKSON COUNTIES

Prior to the opening day of turkey season, Jackson and Calhoun County officers located several bait sites for turkeys. Officers Forehand, Baber and Hayes checked some of the sites and located subjects hunting at three of the sites. All subjects were hunting within 20 yards of corn and/or bird seed. All three subjects were cited for hunting turkey over bait.

## GADSDEN COUNTY

Officer DuBose was scouting for turkey bait on property in Midway. He walked the property for about 30 minutes and found what appeared to be a fresh bait site with a trail camera pointing at it. Well before sunrise on opening morning, he positioned himself to observe and listen for hunting activity near the bait site. Officer Dubose heard what he thought was someone making a hen sound directly between him and the bait site. Officer Dubose exited his concealed location, identified himself as an FWC officer and told the subject to stand up. The subject stood up and Officer Dubose and the subject walked to the bait site. Officer Dubose asked the subject if the trail camera was his and the subject stated it was. Appropriate citations were issued.

## JEFFERSON COUNTY

Officer Mims was conducting resource and boating inspections at a boat ramp when he contacted a subject who had been out fishing in his boat. Upon inspecting his catch, the subject had two legal redfish and a legal pompano. When asked if he had any other fish, he said no. Upon further inspection, Officer Mims found an undersized snook hidden separately from the other fish. The snook measured approximately 22 inches and must be between 28 and 33 inches to be legal to keep. The subject was issued a citation for possession of undersized snook.

## LIBERTY COUNTY

Officer DuBose was conducting vessel safety and resource inspections on the Ochlocknee River. Two miles south of the dam, he saw a man fishing from a vessel. Officer DuBose approached the vessel asking the man if he was having any luck. The man stated he had some catfish and a few bream. Officer DuBose asked the how many bream he caught and the man said 20 to 25. The man opened his cooler and Officer DuBose saw what he thought was more than 25 bream. He advised the man that the fish needed to be counted and the man said he would count the fish. Fifty-six bream were counted. Officer DuBose issued the appropriate citations.

## OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers Pifer and Corbin were on vessel patrol when they conducted a saltwater fisheries and license inspection on a charter fishing vessel returning to its slip in the Destin Harbor with customers on board. An inspection of the vessel's catch revealed

three undersized gray triggerfish had been harvested. The captain of the vessel was issued a citation for the violation.

Officer Corbin was on land patrol at Meigs Beach when he saw several subjects fishing from shore. During a resource inspection, two undersize redfish, measuring 10 and 12 inches, were in a bucket. One individual admitted to catching one of the redfish and his son catching the other. The subject also did not have a valid fishing license. A notice to appear citation was issued for possession of undersize redfish and a resource citation was issued for no valid fishing license.

Officers Corbin and Pifer were on patrol in the Destin Pass when they saw three subjects fishing from the channel fender system. They conducted a resource inspection and found several fish in a cooler on the vessel. One of the fish was an oversize red drum measuring 28 ½ inches in total length. One subject admitted to catching the red drum and was issued a notice to appear citation for the violation.

Officer Corbin was on water patrol when he located a vessel anchored in the Destin Harbor that was at risk of becoming derelict due to its deteriorating condition. The vessel had an expired registration and was partially dismantled. The registered owner of the vessel was deceased, and a business card was left on the vessel. The owner of the vessel contacted Officer Corbin and they agreed to meet to discuss the vessel's condition. Officers Corbin and Pifer met the vessel owner and learned he had purchased the vessel one year ago. He also owned another commercial fishing vessel in the Destin Harbor that he had owned for 10 months. Neither vessel was registered or titled to the subject, and he was issued notice to appear citations for failure to transfer title/registration within 30 days of change of ownership. He was also issued a uniform boating citation for storing a vessel at risk of becoming derelict on state waters.

Officer Corbin was on patrol when he received information of a subject keeping oversized and undersized fish. He saw the subject actively fishing and conducted a resource inspection. During the inspection, two oversized red drum, both measuring 35 inches, were located in a cooler. The subject admitted to catching the fish and did not have a fishing license. A notice to appear citation was issued for possession of oversized red drum and over the bag limit of red drum. A resource citation was also issued for no saltwater fishing license.

## WAKULLA COUNTY

Officer Hofheinz was working a targeted enforcement detail addressing opening of spring turkey season, when he saw subjects in a ground blind. On opening day of youth weekend of spring turkey season, he saw two male subjects and a youth subject exit the blind. After investigating, Officer Hofheinz cited one of the subjects for hunting turkey within 100 yards of bait.

Officer Hughes responded to a complaint of illegally harvesting oysters in the Panacea area. Upon arrival, he saw Officer Kossey speaking with an individual who appeared to

have been harvesting oysters. After a brief struggle with the subject, Officers Hughes and Kossey placed the individual into custody. Officer Hughes was assisted with his investigation by Officers Kossey and McLeod. After questioning individuals at the scene, Officer Hughes cited the subject for taking or harvesting oysters in a prohibited area, possession of unculled oysters, interference with an FWC officer and possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis.

## FEDERAL WATERS

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel "Guardian," Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Boyd and Nelson boarded a commercial vessel approximately 50 miles south of Franklin County. The officers went aboard and during the resource inspection located 26 undersized vermilion snapper and two undersized lane snapper. The appropriate action was taken for the violations.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel "Guardian," Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Boyd and Nelson boarded a commercial vessel just outside the Madison-Swanson Marine Protected Area, approximately 30 miles south of Gulf County. While approaching the vessel, it made evasive maneuvers and the occupants threw amberjack, red grouper and gag grouper overboard to prevent the officers from inspecting the species. The officers recovered the fish, which contained undersized red grouper, and then boarded the vessel. During the boarding, the officers located undersized vermilion snapper, scamp, red grouper and gag grouper. The officers also located reef fish being used as bait and species not landed in whole condition. The appropriate action was taken for the violations.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel "Guardian," Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Boyd and Nelson boarded a commercial vessel in The Middle Grounds Marine Protected Area, approximately 82 miles south of Franklin County. While approaching the vessel, officers could see undersized red grouper lying on the back table of the vessel. The officers boarded the vessel and located vermilion snapper and red grouper not landed in whole condition and being used as bait. The vessel was also deficient on most of the required commercial turtle mitigation gear. The appropriate action was taken for the violations.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel "Guardian," Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Boyd and Nelson boarded a commercial vessel approximately 75 miles south of Franklin County, just outside The Edges Marine Protected Area. A resource inspection of the vessel revealed unpermitted possession of multiple specimens of prohibited live rock. The appropriate action was taken for the violations.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel "Guardian," Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Boyd and Nelson boarded a commercial vessel approximately 30 miles south of Gulf County. While approaching the vessel and communicating with the vessel's crew not to throw anything overboard, they continued to throw fish overboard. Once aboard, officers located red snapper and amberjack not landed in whole condition. They also located

amberjack on hooks being used for bait. The amberjack pieces will be sent to the lab to determine if they are of the greater amberjack species since the season is closed. The vessel was also deficient on the required commercial turtle mitigation gear. Approximately four miles to the west, officers stopped another commercial vessel. The officers located amberjack not landed in whole condition. The amberjack will be sent to the lab to determine if it is greater amberjack since the season is closed. The appropriate action was taken for the violations.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel "Guardian," Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Boyd and Nelson boarded a commercial vessel approximately 33 miles south of Gulf County. The officers boarded this same vessel four days earlier, at which time they located 26 undersized vermilion snapper and two undersized lane snapper. During this approach, the officers saw the crew throw cut up fish overboard. Once aboard, the officers located greater amberjack, currently closed for harvest. They also located undersized greater amberjack and gray triggerfish. The officers located amberjack being used as bait and red snapper, greater amberjack and banded rudderfish not landed in whole condition. The appropriate action was taken for the violations.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel "Guardian," Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Boyd, Nelson and Travis boarded a commercial longline vessel approximately 75 miles south of Panama City. During the resource inspection, officers located banded rudderfish, yellow edge grouper, golden tilefish, shark, and greater amberjack not landed in whole condition and currently closed for harvest. They located several of these species being used as bait. The vessel also had permitting violations. The appropriate action was taken for the violations.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

### JEFFERSON COUNTY

Officer Wilcox taught the laws portion the hunter safety program at the Jefferson County Correctional Institute. There were eight people in attendance.

## NORTH CENTRAL REGION

### CASES

#### DUVAL COUNTY

Officer Shearer was conducting resource/JEA inspections at Mayport Boat Ramp when a subject stated he had some black sea bass and trigger fish on board. An inspection revealed undersized black sea bass and a 30-inch red snapper in the bottom of a fish box. The appropriate federal and state citations were issued.

## COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer Yates visited private property he had been rechecking for approximately two weeks. At the beginning of spring turkey season, information was given that the property contained two active bait sites and signs of a turkey being taken. While approaching the property by vehicle, Officer Yates noticed a vehicle parked at one of the property gates. With assistance from Officer McGrath, both officers were able to track two subjects on the property hunting turkey in two separate hunting blinds within 20 yards of bait (whole corn). Both subjects were issued the appropriate citations for attempting to take turkey over bait.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

### LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Officers Davenport and Fowler participated in a public outreach event at Lafayette County School. There were more than 450 students in attendance for this event. Both officers presented information on boating safety, resource conservation, conflict wildlife and state vessel regulations. The resource conservation display included FWC dive team equipment and discussions on the many aspects of being a state conservation officer.

## NORTHEAST REGION

### CASES

#### LAKE COUNTY

Officer Shaw was on water patrol on the Palatlahaha River when he saw two vessels with two occupants each actively fishing. Officer Shaw conducted resource inspections. During the inspection, one of the subjects stated that they “catch and release,” but Officer Shaw watched as they placed fish in their live well. After the inspection, the subject had too many black bass over 16 inches and the subject was cited appropriately.

Officers Presser and Fahnestock received information that subjects were illegally hunting turkey on private property adjacent to the Rock Springs Run State Preserve. The officers located bait on the private property as well as on the state preserve. The officers worked the area and early one morning they located three individuals hunting over the bait on the private property and one individual hunting over bait in the State Preserve. The appropriate citations were issued to all individuals.

Officer Teal was on patrol when he saw a vehicle pull into a piece of private property which had bait on the ground. He entered the property and could hear someone actively

calling for turkey. As he tracked towards the calls, he found multiple large areas with corn spread on the ground. He continued to walk the property and contacted two individuals in a ground blind within 20 yards of the bait site, actively calling turkeys with deployed decoys. Both subjects were cited appropriately.

## VOLUSIA COUNTY

While investigating a separate incident at Blue Springs State Park, Officer McKee and Lieutenant Eason contacted a white male (passenger) and a white female (driver) parked near the French Landing boat ramp. An open container of beer was next to the white male and he advised it was his. Further investigation revealed marijuana and cocaine in the possession of the female driver. She was arrested and booked into the Volusia County Jail.

Officers North and Malicoat worked a property in Osteen on the second weekend of turkey season where bait had been previously located. From their concealed location the officers saw a subject arrive just after daylight and spread bird seed on the ground in front of a turkey blind. He then entered the blind and began to call turkey with a slate. The officers approached, and the man admitted to hunting turkeys over bait. He was issued a citation for the violation.

Officer Fletcher encountered a man hunting turkey in Lake George Wildlife Management Area (WMA) during a time when the WMA was closed to hunting. He was issued a citation for hunting during a closed season.

Officers North and Vanas were working a property in Deleon Springs on the first day of turkey season that had been previously found to have cracked corn spread out in several locations. An individual hunting the property shot an Osceola turkey and the officers responded to that location. The man staged a fake kill sight and showed the officers, claiming that is where the bird was shot. Officer North and his K-9 partner Max found the man's shotgun wadding and proved that he killed the bird on a neighbors' property, while it was standing in a pile of cracked corn. The man was cited for taking a turkey within 100 yards of bait. The neighboring property owner declined to press felony trespass charges against the subject.

Officer Sapp saw a man calling turkey with decoys set up in a road within 20 yards of cracked corn near New Smyrna. A citation was issued for the violation.

Officer Malicoat was on joint water patrol with personnel from United States Coast Guard Station Ponce Inlet in the New Smyrna Beach area when an adult male was illegally fishing from a portion of the bridge structure with his boat tied off nearby. After speaking with the subject, Officer Malicoat inspected the two coolers in his boat which contained twenty sheepshead. He was issued a criminal notice to appear for possessing more than the allowed daily bag limit of eight.

## BREVARD COUNTY

Officers Kearney and D. Humphrey were on patrol when they saw a vessel returning to a local boat ramp. The officers approached the vessel to conduct a safety inspection when they saw signs of impairment. After conducting Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST), the man was placed under arrest for boating under the influence (BUI). A test of the man's breath revealed .158, nearly twice the legal limit.

Lieutenant Lightsey was on patrol when he saw a vessel in violation of a slow speed zone. While conducting a vessel safety inspection and addressing the violation, the officer noticed signs of impairment. After conducting Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST) the man was placed under arrest for boating under the influence with a passenger under eighteen years of age on board. The operator refused to provide a sample of his breath and will be assessed a \$500.00 civil penalty in addition to a citation for violation of the slow speed zone.

While on patrol, Lieutenant Lightsey saw a man returning to his vehicle from fishing along the shoreline. At first the man stated he had pulled off the roadway to use his cell phone, but the officer smelled a strong odor of fish coming from the man. After speaking with the man, he advised he had caught some mullet. A full resource inspection revealed the man was in possession of an undersized snook, possession of one undersized tripletail, illegal method of take for tripletail (cast net), no snook stamp and was not in possession of his fishing license. A notice to appear was issued for the violations.

## OSCEOLA COUNTY

Officers Mendelson and Hocker worked the second weekend of spring gobbler season on a piece of private property that borders state land. Officer Hocker discovered a baited field next to a ground blind with bird seed and cracked corn nearby that is consistent with illegal turkey hunting. Officer Hocker worked the site and saw an individual attempting to take turkey near the blind. After an assessment of the evidence and a field interview it was found that the individual was in violation of hunting turkey over bait. He was issued a notice to appear for taking wild turkey within 100 yards of bait.

While on foot patrol Officer Hocker heard a gunshot that was consistent with a shotgun load that came from a nearby property. Officer Mendelson and Officer Hocker quickly moved to the area where the shot originated. The officers contacted a subject and conducted an interview. The interview led the officers to where the turkey was harvested. Officers located fresh cracked corn and bird seed within 10 yards of the blind used by the subject. Officer Mendelson issued the individual who harvested the turkey a notice to appear for taking wild turkey within 100 yards of bait.

## PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Wester received a call from the Putnam County Sheriff's Office (SO) about possible unlawful taking of alligators. During an unrelated call the SO found numerous alligator parts at a home in Georgetown. Officers Wester and Cheshire interviewed the subject at the jail and he admitted to wading out into the St. John's River and killing two alligators with a bow and arrow and a knife. All the alligator parts were located at the home and were seized. Charges have been filed with the State Attorney's Office for unlawful taking of alligator.

## MARION COUNTY

Officers Dias and Rice responded to a call in the Pipeline Unit of Ocala Wildlife Management Area near Forest Road 11 and Forest Road 50 for dogs pursuing wildlife. Once in the area the officers located a couple of trucks with dogs and boxes. Individuals from the group admitted to hunting coyotes and were equipped with a .22 caliber scoped and loaded Marlin rifle. The officers also saw the subjects catch their dogs. As there is no current small game hunting season open, the individuals were issued notices to appear for hunting during the closed small game season.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

### INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Lieutenant Zamonis, Officer Delano, and Officer Marroquin assisted with the Youth Blue Water Open Fishing Tournament held in Sebastian. The outreach consisted of bringing an airboat and live gator for the 50 children, ranging in ages 9-15, and helping with fishing techniques. FWC educated the children on the species of fish they were catching and the importance of conservation.

### OSCEOLA COUNTY

Lieutenant Trusley, Officer Summers, and Officer Stelzer attended the Swamp Cabbage Festival in Kenansville where they presented the FWC exhibition trailer. They reached out to hundreds of participants at the festival discussing Florida's resources, FWC agency goals/missions, and local rules and regulations.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Officer Delano responded to a rescue call from Sebastian Inlet, where a surfer had collided with the north jetty. Witness statements concluded that the individual was seen surfing and was unable to evade the concrete pilings. The surfer was stuck in the rocks and risked getting pulled out to sea from the strong outgoing tide. Two surfers and some others were able to get the individual to land, while FWC, EMS, and Brevard

County/Indian River County Sheriffs arrived on scene. The individual suffered minor injuries.

## **SOUTHWEST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **CHARLOTTE COUNTY**

Officer Lejarzar and Lieutenant Ruggiero were on land patrol in the Webb Management Area around dusk when they saw two vehicles parked near a lake. The officers could see several people packing up their fishing gear as they approached to conduct a fisheries inspection. While speaking with two of the people, Officer Lejarzar got permission to search their car. When he opened the door, he smelled the odor of marijuana inside. During his search, Officer Lejarzar found a plastic container with a green leafy substance that later tested positive for cannabis. Lieutenant Ruggiero also suspected there might be narcotics in the other vehicle, so he got permission from the other vehicle owner and his wife to search their truck. Both people were adamant there were not any drugs in the truck. When Lieutenant Ruggiero got inside the vehicle, he found a plastic container which contained a green leafy substance that tested positive for cannabis. Both subjects were issued misdemeanor charges for possession of marijuana under twenty grams.

#### **HARDEE COUNTY**

Officer Specialist Cloud and Officer Franks were on foot patrol in an area where they found a suspected turkey blind near a feeder full of cracked corn. Shortly before sunrise they saw a subject drive up and enter the blind. As they were waiting for the subject to begin calling in turkeys, a bearded turkey ran past their location towards the blind. The subject shot and killed the turkey as it ran past the front of the blind. Officer Cloud and Officer Franks announced themselves and instructed the subject to step out of the blind. The subject admitted to shooting the turkey and admitted to knowing about the feeder full of cracked corn. The subject was given a notice to appear for hunting turkey over bait. The subject's gun was seized for evidence.

#### **LEE COUNTY**

Officer Winton was on vessel patrol off the coast of Sanibel Island when he saw a fishing vessel returning from offshore waters. A vessel stop was conducted and one of the subjects was in possession of an undersized and out of season gag grouper. A notice to appear was issued to the subject who possessed the fish.

Officer Bell was on land patrol when he noticed several individuals running back and forth on a seawall. He pulled into a vacant lot on the other side of the canal in plain view and watched several individuals feeding an alligator bread while another attempted to

catch the alligator with a lure on a fishing pole. Officer Bell drove around to the location and contacted the individuals. They were read Miranda and admitted to feeding and attempting to catch the alligator. Proper citations were issued to two of the individuals and an alligator trapper was notified.

While on federal water patrol, Officer Bell and Officer Gray encountered a vessel fishing on the state/federal boundary line. As the officers approached the vessel they noticed the subject catch a tripletail and release it back into the water. The officers conducted a marine fisheries inspection of the vessel and located an undersized tripletail in a cooler. The captain was appropriately cited for the violation.

While on federal water patrol, Officer Bell and Officer Gray encountered a vessel returning from federal waters. The vessel was stopped to conduct a marine fisheries inspection. During the inspection, the officers located five undersize vermilion snapper. The appropriate citation was issued.

Captive Wildlife Investigator O'Horo completed an investigation involving a marmoset monkey. A volunteer sustained multiple injuries on the scalp, head, ear and hands. Investigator O'Horo will be filing charges with the state attorney's office on the licensee of the facility for unsafe housing of captive wildlife resulting in an injury to a person.

## MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Davidson was on water patrol around Cortez Bridge. He stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel transiting in the intracoastal waterway. During his inspection, he noticed that the operator of the vessel seemed to be impaired. Officer Davidson investigated to determine the level of the operator's impairment. The subject was placed under arrest for boating under the influence of alcohol and taken to the Manatee County Jail.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

While on patrol, Officer Specialist Bibeau saw an individual actively fishing from underneath a bridge. He contacted the individual to conduct a fisheries inspection. Officer Specialist Bibeau located six undersized sheepshead. A search through agency files and found that the subject had previously been warned for a similar violation. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for possession of undersized sheepshead.

Officer Specialist Bibeau saw an individual actively fishing from the shoreline. He contacted the individual to conduct a fisheries inspection. Officer Specialist Bibeau located four large seatrout, two of the seatrout measured over twenty inches. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for harvesting more than one seatrout over twenty inches.

## POLK COUNTY

Officer DeWeese saw an individual turkey hunting in an orange grove. During a resource inspection, he found the subject to be within 100 yards of bait while attempting to harvest turkey. Officer DeWeese issued the subject a notice to appear for the turkey hunting violation.

Officer DeWeese saw another individual attempting to harvest a turkey within 100 yards of bait, this time while hunting on a private hunting lease. He contacted the subject and issued a notice to appear for the turkey hunting violation.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### PASCO COUNTY

FWC dispatch received a report of a subject that had failed to check out of the Green Swamp West Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The subject was taking part in the special opportunity spring turkey hunt. Multiple FWC personnel responded to look for the lost subject. Officer Fagan was the first officer on scene and located the subject at the main gate. The subject had gone down the Withlacoochee River and did not realize when the WMA closed for the day. The search efforts were concluded since the individual was located safe and sound.

## MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

### LEE COUNTY

Officer Winton received information about an injured cormorant on the floating bait shop at the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River. Officer Winton responded, collected the bird, and transported it back to shore where he turned it over to the CROW rehabilitation clinic for treatment.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Lieutenant Fugate, Officer Stephens, Officer Deweese, Officer Franks and Officer Catalano conducted a directed conservation patrol in Highlands Hammock State Park. The special detail was in the form of speed enforcement in response to such problems in the park. This detail produced multiple contacts resulting in one arrest for no driver's license, two infractions for speeding and multiple warnings about other offenses.

## **SOUTH REGION A**

### CASES

## PALM BEACH COUNTY

While on patrol of the Jupiter Inlet, Officer Norbrothen saw a vessel selling live bait to other vessels. The officer conducted a fisheries inspection on the vessel and found the captain did not possess the proper licenses to sell saltwater products directly to a consumer. The captain was written a notice to appear (citation) for the violation and written multiple warnings for licensing and registration violations.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Howell and Environmental Investigator Booth responded to a complaint of an individual who was unlicensed to possess a marmoset monkey. The monkey was voluntarily surrendered to the investigators and then turned over to a licensed facility. Three warnings were issued for the illegal possession and other related violations.

Officer Brodbeck was on vessel patrol near Lake Worth Inlet when a call was received regarding a subject spearfishing near a fishing bridge. The officer arrived in the area and was able to locate a subject matching the description who was actively spearfishing without a dive flag. As the officer approached the subject, a speargun with a fish attached was in his possession. Officer Brodbeck identified himself as an FWC Officer and the subject dropped the speargun, fish and submerged. After attempting to elude the officer for approximately 5 minutes, the subject eventually agreed to come on board the patrol vessel. Officer Brodbeck brought the subject back where the speargun and fish had been dropped and the subject agreed to retrieve the items. Once the subject was brought back aboard the patrol vessel, he was detained and read Miranda. The subject admitted that he had dropped the speargun and fish and attempted to flee upon seeing the officer. The subject was issued three misdemeanor resource citations for spearfishing within 100 yards of a fishing bridge, resisting arrest without violence, and failure to allow inspection. The subject additionally received non-criminal citations for no saltwater fishing license and no dive flag.

## BROWARD COUNTY

Officer Brock was on vessel patrol at night when he saw a vessel on plane in a restricted area with no lights on. He stopped the vessel for those violations and did a boating safety inspection. Officer Brock placed the operator who was the only occupant on the vessel under arrest for extraditable warrants out of Martin County. He also issued the individual several boating safety citations. He transported the individual to the Broward County Jail without incident.

Officers Lopez, Vacin and Matthews responded to the area of Bahia Mar about a boating accident that involved two rental personal watercrafts. One individual had to be transported to a local hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Officer Brock was conducting a boating accident investigation near the Dania Cut Off canal and the intracoastal waterway in the early morning hours. One unknown vessel

ran over a smaller vessel whose occupants were fishing. The two occupants had to jump into the water to avoid being hit. This is an ongoing boating accident investigation.

An individual was found guilty in federal court for illegal possession of bunting birds that are federally protected. The case began when Officer Grant was dispatched to a call involving parrots. Pursuant to her interviews, she contacted federal agents to continue with the investigation. The federal agents were able to open a case and file charges against the individual.

Officers Brock and Vacin were dispatched to the Hillsboro Inlet about a call for assistance from the US Coast Guard. The US Coast Guard personnel on scene relayed they had contacted and saw an individual operating a vessel. Through their observations, the Coast Guard believed the operator to be under the influence. Officer Vacin took the lead and after conducting seated field sobriety tasks, the operator was placed under arrest for BUI (boating under the influence), transported to the Sheriff's Office Breath Alcohol Test facility and then to the Broward County Jail.

Officer Hart was patrolling the Big Cypress Wildlife Management Area with park rangers from the National Park Service when they heard several shots fired. Officer Hart and the park rangers drove out of the area and onto the L-28 canal levee where they saw two pickup trucks. One of the trucks had a rifle in the back that was pointed in the officers' direction. The truck with the rifle also had fresh spent casings in the bed of the truck. The subject with the rifle had just been shooting in the direction of the trail where the officers were on patrol. The subject was cited for the criminal violation of public discharge of a firearm. The rifle was seized and entered into evidence.

## MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Brevik was conducting state water patrol around the Stuart Causeway when he saw three people fishing from the bridge. He approached the subjects and advised them that he was going to perform a saltwater fisheries inspection. Officer Brevik asked the subjects what kind of fish they caught, and they said sand perch. During the inspection, Officer Brevik discovered an undersized pompano at the bottom of the subject's fish bucket. After questioning, Officer Brevik issued the subject a criminal citation for possession of undersized pompano.

Officers Brevik and Carrol were conducting state water patrol at the Palm City Bridge, when they saw four subjects fishing with a cast net from the catwalk. Both officers approached the subjects and identified themselves as FWC state law enforcement. The officers saw the subjects dump their fish cooler and cast net over the catwalk after being told not to throw the cooler and net into the water. Officer Brevik entered the water to retrieve the cast net. Officer Brevik saw, still inside the cast net, 12 undersized snook. All four subjects were arrested for possession of undersized snook, taking snook by illegal method, and resisting arrest. All subjects were booked into the Martin County Jail.

Officers Carroll and Brevik were conducting patrol at Sandsprit Park when they saw three subjects fishing from land. The officers saw the subjects catch a snook with a cast net and hide it in their vehicle. The officers approached the subjects and investigated the situation. After investigation, the three subjects were arrested for taking snook by illegal method and resisting arrest. The three subjects were booked into the Martin County Jail.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Trawinski and Defeo, with Lieutenant Phillip responded to a call of a capsized vessel just off the coast of Singer Island. The officers were able to locate the vessel and, along with the Coast Guard, searched the area for possible people in the water or other associated debris. No people were found in the area. Despite rough sea conditions, the officers were able to get the registration numbers from the capsized vessel. A records check showed that the registered owner had a larger vessel that had been issued a citation a few months ago while moored nearby in the intracoastal. Using the information from that citation, the officers were able to successfully locate the vessel owner, who advised that the day before while sailing offshore, he was caught in a bad storm and sustained significant damage to his larger vessel causing him to have to cut loose his dingy and abandon it.

## MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck was on vessel patrol when he received a call regarding an injured loggerhead sea turtle near West Palm Beach. Upon arriving, three individuals were helping to keep a large loggerhead afloat that had been struck by a vessel. With their assistance, Officer Brodbeck was able to load the large turtle onto the patrol vessel. The injured turtle was transported to Phil Foster Park where it was transferred to staff members from Loggerhead Marine Life Center, where the turtle will be treated for its injuries.

## **SOUTH REGION B**

### CASES

#### MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officer Stanton and Officer Bruder were on water patrol when they saw a vessel displaying fishing rods around Haulover Sandbar. Upon contact, the subject claimed he was returning from the Bahamas. He was found to be in possession a bag of fillets without the skin attached and cited accordingly.

Officer Sample saw 3 individuals on the Rickenbacker Fishing Pier harvesting shrimp with cast nets. Upon conducting a resource inspection, each subject was found to be over their daily bag limit, which is 5 gallons of shrimp, heads on, per person. In addition, 2 of the subjects did not possess a valid saltwater fishing license. The appropriate citations were issued.

Officers Sample, Langley, and Trawinski were on water patrol near Haulover Sandbar. They saw a boat speed away from the sandbar, on plane, inside a posted idle speed no wake zone. The boat proceeded directly across the intracoastal waterway channel, cutting in front of multiple boats navigating in the channel. They initiated a vessel stop and conducted a boating safety inspection. They saw numerous signs of impairment from the operator and conducted standardized field sobriety tasks. The subject was arrested and given the opportunity to provide a breath sample. After providing a breath sample, Officer Sample charged the subject for operating a vessel with an unlawful breath alcohol content of .08 or higher and transported him to Turner Guilford Knight Jail.

Officer Cartaya was on land-based water patrol on the Rickenbacker Fishing Pier when he saw one male actively cast netting shrimp. He contacted the subject to conduct a fisheries inspection. The inspection revealed a 6-gallon bucket almost full of shrimp. The harvester stated that he was responsible for the bucket of shrimp and appropriate action was taken.

## MONROE COUNTY

Officers Hoppe and Thompson were on water patrol in Whale Harbor Channel when they saw a 24-foot vessel attempting to leave the sandbar with its anchor still in the water and many occupants on board. They initiated a vessel safety inspection and Officer Hoppe noticed signs of impairment from the operator. Officer Hoppe had the operator of the vessel conduct SFSTs and determined the man to be operating the vessel with his normal faculties impaired. He refused to provide a breath sample and was booked into Plantation Key Jail.

Officer Conrad and Investigator Mattson were on water patrol in Tavernier. They received an anonymous tip of several individuals catching undersized snapper at the Tavernier Creek bridge. Officer Conrad and Investigator Mattson responded by vessel, and Investigator Mattson dropped Officer Conrad off on the seawall. When he approached the group, one of them had walked away behind an embankment and was returning. Officer Conrad investigated and found a cooler. The individuals admitted to owning the cooler and stated there was fish in it. Inside the cooler was 23 undersized mangrove snapper. The suspects were cited for undersized mangrove snapper, over the bag limit of mangrove snapper, and interference/obstruction of an FWC officer.

## COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Parker was on patrol when she saw a fishing vessel in the closed Critical Wildlife Area of ABC Islands. Upon further investigation, she found three men fishing next to one of the islands. The men fishing were cited accordingly.

Officers Richards and Foell conducted a fisheries patrol from Key West to the Dry Tortugas onboard FWC offshore patrol vessel Trident. The officers conducted a fisheries inspection on multiple-day charter fishing vessel Capt. Andy. The vessel was actively fishing in South Atlantic, federal waters. Officer Foell boarded the vessel and thoroughly inspected coolers that were full of snapper-grouper species. The vessel had been offshore for three days, with one captain and six customers onboard. Upon inspection, six out of season grouper, five undersized mutton snapper and two undersized yellowtail snapper were located. The vessel contained a total of 192 yellowtail snapper and 28 mutton snapper, putting them 80 snapper over the allowable two-day aggregate bag limit. The vessel captain was cited appropriately.

Officer Reams and Rubenstein were working the spring gobbler season in an area known to have bait stations. The officers saw an individual in a tree stand hunting over 3 bait sites located on both private and preserve land. The individual was with 3 decoys and calling turkey 50 feet from the fresh bait sites. Subjects are not legally allowed to hunt within 100 yards of bait for turkey in Florida. The individual was cited accordingly.

Officers Conroy and McVaney were on water patrol when they saw a vessel and initiated a stop to conduct a vessel safety inspection. During the inspection, Officers Conroy and McVaney saw several indicators of impairment from the operator including the odor of alcohol emanating from the operator's breath. The operator consented to board the patrol vessel to perform Seated Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST). The operator's performance on the tasks further indicated probable cause of impairment. Officer Conroy placed the operator under arrest for Boating Under the Influence (BUI). The operator refused to provide a breath sample, he was transported to the Naples Jail.

Officers Knutson and Yurewitch were on patrol near Marco Pass and saw a fishing vessel entering the pass. The officers initiated a stop to conduct a resource inspection on the vessel. When asked where they were coming from, they stated they were in federal waters anywhere between 9 and 40 miles out. Documentation of their chart coordinates also confirmed they were fishing in federal waters. During the inspection, the officers found 73 lane snapper and 24 vermilion snapper, totaling 97 fish in the 20 combined reef fish per person total in federal waters. With an allowed maximum of 80 combined reef fish on board, the individuals were 17 fish over the bag limit. One of the individuals onboard claimed to be responsible for all the fish. The violations were forwarded to a National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Enforcement officer.

Officers Arbogast, Oldsen, and Conroy were conducting water patrol and saw a vessel traveling east through the Marco River without the required red/green navigational lights present. The vessel was stopped to address the navigational light violation and to conduct a boating safety inspection. During the stop, the officers saw several possible

indicators of impairment from the operator. There were several alcoholic beverage containers found in the vessel. Officer Arbogast conducted Seated Field Sobriety Tests (SFST). The operator performed poorly. Officer Arbogast placed the operator under arrest for boating under the influence (BUI). A back-up officer of the Collier County Sheriff's office arrived on scene to assist with transport to the local substation. Officer Kleis met the officers at the substation to administer a breath test on the operator, yielding a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) result of .136.

While Officer Parker was on land patrol she stopped to check two individuals fishing at a local bridge. Upon inspection she found that the individuals had an undersized red drum caught in a closed area. The individual was cited accordingly.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

### MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Major Escanio, Officer Washington, Investigator Almagro and Lieutenant Reynaud participated in an annual 5K Run. The race was a major fundraiser for the Rotary Club of Bal Harbour and the Bal Harbour Village Police Department, in memory of Police Chief Mark N. Overton and Police Chief Miguel De La Rosa. All proceeds from the race fund The Rotary Club of Bal Harbour, Chief Mark N. Overton, and the Chief Miguel De La Rosa Legacy Memorial Scholarship.

Captain Maza coordinated a meeting between maritime partners regarding major upcoming marine-related events – the Air and Sea show and the Ultra Music Festival which are attended by thousands of visitors respectively. The meeting was attended by representatives from the Coast Guard, Coral Gables, Key Biscayne, and City of Miami marine patrols.

### MONROE COUNTY

Officer Dube along with FWC Commissioner Spottswood and Regional Director Graef toured the Keys Marine Lab in Layton to learn more about conserving the coral reef ecosystem. The FWC has been partnering with several other agencies to combat the multi-year outbreak of stony coral tissue loss disease. They learned about the process that the researchers and scientists are doing to grow and transplant newly grown corals and the challenges they face in transplanting these corals into specific locations on the reef tract.

### COLLIER COUNTY

Lieutenant Bulger along with Officers Araujo, Rubenstein, and McVaney participated in a hunter safety course that was held at the Collier County Sheriff's Office gun range. The officers used this outreach event to educate attendees on hunting regulations and laws specific to Collier County and surrounding areas. The officers became familiar with

new subjects over the course of the morning. Time was spent time answering questions about quota hunts and education on hunting ethics and scenarios.

## MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

### COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Rubenstein was on land patrol along the east side of the Florida Panther Refuge when he saw an adult Florida panther running northbound on HWY 29 North of I-75. Lieutenant Bulger coordinated with refuge personnel to arrange to have gates opened along the highway. Officer Rubenstein controlled traffic to prevent the panther from being hit by cars. Shortly after the refuge director opened a gate, Officer Rubenstein coaxed the large cat back into the refuge.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### MONROE COUNTY

The SRB Dive Team has been actively assisting the agency, along with the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, in conducting underwater investigations regarding criminal cases. The team conducted an underwater survey of a derelict vessel to confirm the amount of litter that was intentionally dumped. Felony charges are pending. The team also helped conduct an above and below water survey of the extensive damages caused by a sailboat that had run aground on Western Dry Rocks Reef. A federal investigation is ongoing. The team was also able to conduct search patterns to attempt to locate evidence in regard to a recent Baker Act Case issued by the sheriff's office. The team has been working closely with the Sheriff's Office Dive Team to coordinate these efforts.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Stearns and Carroll were dispatched to a report of a sinking vessel in the Narrows. The officers were able to locate the vessel. The officers found the owner aboard the vessel and helped him with requesting a salvage boat for assistance.