

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report



Patrol, Protect, Preserve

May 24, 2019 through May 30, 2019

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

NORTHWEST REGION

CASES

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Allgood and Captain Glover were on water patrol in the Pensacola Pass when they stopped a vessel coming in from off shore with fishing gear present on the vessel. While conducting a fisheries inspection the officers found two undersized cobia on board the vessel. Two of the vessel occupants admitted to catching the cobia and were issued citations for taking undersized cobia.

Officer Allgood and Captain Glover were on patrol when they saw a vessel violating a wake zone and driving in an erratic manor cutting across other vessel's paths on several occasions. The officers conducted a stop to address the violations and saw several indicators of impairment. Officer Allgood administered field sobriety tasks and determined that the operator was impaired. Officer Allgood arrested the operator for operating a vessel while normal faculties were impaired and transported him to the Escambia County Jail.

Officers Long and Clark were on vessel patrol at Big Lagoon State Park in Pensacola when they saw a vessel violate a wake zone. After conducting a stop to address the violation, the officers detected several indicators of impairment. After field sobriety tasks, the officers placed the operator under arrest for operating a vessel while normal faculties were impaired and transported him to the Escambia County Jail.

GULF COUNTY

Officers M. Webb and H. Webb were assigned to the BUI Task Force working St. Joe Bay during the Memorial Day weekend. During a vessel safety inspection, they noticed the captain of a vessel showing signs of impairment. The subject was brought aboard the patrol vessel and field sobriety exercises were performed. The subject was placed under arrest for boating under the influence. The subject refused a breath test and was booked into the Gulf County Jail.

Officers Gerber and Little were assigned to the BUI Task Force working St. Joe Bay near Highland View. During a vessel safety inspection, the officers noticed the captain showing signs of impairment. Standard field sobriety exercises were conducted. He was placed under arrest, refused a lawful breath test, and was transported to the Gulf County Jail.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Officer Wilcox was on water patrol at the Wacissa headwaters and stopped a vessel with a Georgia registration to conduct a boating safety inspection. During her inspection, Officer Wilcox noticed the vessel operator was showing signs of impairment, and she could smell the odor of an alcoholic beverage on his breath. Officer Wilcox had the subject perform standard field sobriety exercises during which he showed more signs of impairment. The subject was transported to jail where his breath sample was over twice the legal limit.

Over the Memorial Day weekend, Officers Wilcox, Mims, and Lieutenant Wass de Czege conducted boating safety patrols on the Wacissa River. They checked 159 vessels for boating safety compliance, contacted 320 boaters and documented 95 violations.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Pifer stopped a vessel returning from the Gulf of Mexico with five individuals and fishing gear on board. During a resource inspection of the vessel, an out of season greater amberjack was in the fish box in the front of the vessel. The owner/operator of the vessel admitted to catching the fish and was cited for the violation.

Lieutenant Molnar, Officer Pifer and Officer Corbin were on water patrol when they conducted a vessel stop on a personal watercraft with an expired registration decal. During the stop, the operator stated he had purchased the vessel several months ago. A check of the vessel's registration showed it was still registered to the previous owner. The operator was cited for failure to transfer title within 30 days of change of ownership.

Officers Pifer and Corbin were on water patrol when they were contacted by the United States Coast Guard personnel to assist with a vessel stop on a personal watercraft whose operator was showing indicators of impairment. After speaking to the USCG boarding officer, Officer Pifer contacted the vessel operator and saw several signs of

impairment. The operator agreed to perform standardized field sobriety tasks. The operator was placed under arrest for boating under the influence. At Coast Guard Station Destin, the subject provided a breath sample. The results showed a breath alcohol level of 0.183 and 0.169.

Officers Pifer and Corbin were on water patrol in Destin Harbor when they saw a vessel with seven individuals on board violating an idle speed-no wake zone. A vessel stop was conducted to address the violation and to perform a boating safety inspection. During the inspection, the operator was only able to produce six personal floatation devices and showed indicators of impairment. The operator agreed to perform standardized field sobriety tasks. Officer Pifer placed the operator under arrest for boating under the influence. The operator was cited for boating under the influence, refusal to submit to a breath test, insufficient number of PFDs, and violation of the idle speed/no wake zone.

Officers Pifer and Maltais were on water patrol near Crab Island when they stopped a personal watercraft. The operator was wearing a personal floatation device which was not securely fastened and did not have the kill switch attached. During the stop, Officer Pifer detected the strong odor of an alcoholic beverage coming from the operator when he spoke. The operator agreed to perform standardized field sobriety tasks. Officer Pifer placed the operator under arrest for boating under the influence. The operator was cited for boating under the influence, refusal to submit to a breath test, and operating a PWC with the kill switch not attached.

Captain Glover, Lieutenant Bartlett, and Officer Pifer were on water patrol when they saw a vessel returning from the Gulf of Mexico. There were six individuals on board with fishing gear and the vessel was violating an idle speed/no wake zone. A vessel stop was initiated to address the violation and to conduct a saltwater fisheries and license inspection. During the fisheries inspection, an out of season greater amberjack was in a fish box. The greater amberjack was separated from all other fish on board the vessel. An occupant of the vessel admitted to catching the fish and was cited for the violation.

Officer Hahr, Pifer, and Lieutenant Bartlett were on water patrol at Crab Island when they saw a cabin motor vessel violating the idle speed/no wake zone. A vessel stop was conducted to address the boating violation. During the boating safety inspection, Lieutenant Bartlett saw several indicators of impairment being displayed by the operator. The operator was asked to perform standardized field sobriety tasks and was arrested for boating under the influence. He later refused to provide a breath sample and was issued boating citations for operating a vessel while normal faculties impaired, refusal to submit to a lawful breath test, and violating the idle speed/no wake zone.

Officers Hahr and Rockwell were conducting water patrol on the Shoal River when they stopped a vessel for a boating safety inspection. Throughout the inspection, Officer Hahr saw several signs of impairment from the operator of the vessel. The operator was asked to perform a series of field sobriety tasks and was arrested for boating under the influence. After arriving at the county jail, he refused to provide a lawful breath sample

and was issued boating citations for operating a vessel while normal faculties impaired, refusal to provide a breath sample, and for insufficient number of life jackets onboard his vessel.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Lieutenant Berryman received information that a subject fishing on the Pensacola fishing pier caught an oversized red drum and placed it in his cooler. Lieutenant Berryman arrived at the pier a few minutes later and located the subject in question who possessed a 34-inch red drum. Lieutenant Berryman issued the subject a citation for taking an oversized red drum.

Captain Glover and Officer Ramos were on vessel patrol in the Santa Rosa sound and conducted a resource inspection on a boat returning from off-shore. The two occupants appeared nervous and during questioning admitted they had harvested a red snapper even though they knew it was closed season. A large red snapper was seized and a notice to appear was issued to the vessel operator.

FEDERAL WATERS

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel NW FINCAT, Officers Cushing, Land and Matechik boarded a recreational vessel south of Pensacola in federal waters. During the boarding, officers located several gray triggerfish on the vessel. Gray triggerfish are currently closed to harvest. The appropriate action was taken for the violation.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel INTREPID, Lieutenant Marlow and Officer Boyd boarded a recreational vessel approximately 13 miles south of Dog Island. During the boarding Officer Boyd found four gag grouper. Gag grouper season was closed at the time. The appropriate action was taken for the violation.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel NW FINCAT, Officers Cushing, Land and Matechik boarded a recreational vessel south of Pensacola in federal waters. During the approach to the vessel, Officer Cushing noticed that the vessel made evasive maneuvers and moved from their original location. Officers were placed on the vessel to conduct the boarding and located five gray triggerfish. Officer Cushing drove back in the vessel's prop wash to its original fishing location and found a bag of fresh fish fillets that were identified as triggerfish. Gray triggerfish are currently closed to harvest and it is illegal to fillet them on the water. The appropriate action was taken for the violation.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel NW FINCAT, Officers Cushing, Land and Matechik boarded a commercial state charter vessel 12 miles south of Pensacola in federal waters. During the boarding, the officers determined that the vessel and its captain were on an active charter trip. The captain did not possess the proper federal permits to possess reef fish in federal waters nor conduct charters in federal waters. The appropriate action was taken for the violation.

Officers Cushing, Land and Matechik were on board the NW FINCAT patrolling federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Multiple violations were discovered on several different vessels. Officer Land boarded a vessel and found violations of failure to land reef fish in whole condition and possession of greater amberjack during closed season. Officer Matechik boarded a vessel and discovered a charter boat being operated in federal waters without the proper permit to retain reef fish. Officer Cushing boarded a vessel and discovered several gray triggerfish onboard during closed season. The appropriate action was taken for the violations.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel GUARDIAN, Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Balgo, Boyd, and Schulz were offshore working a stone crab trap closure. During the patrol they encountered several recreational vessels. Fisheries inspections revealed two vessels in possession of gag grouper during federal closure. The appropriate action was taken for the violations.

Officers Cushing, Land and Matechik were onboard the NW FINCAT and assisted a vessel taking on water 12 miles south of Pensacola. What started as an attempted marine fisheries inspection of a small center console with four adults onboard quickly turned into a citizen assist after the operator indicated on VHF 16 that he was taking on water and was not able to stop. FWC crew communicated with USCG about the situation and was able to get the vessel in jeopardy to follow behind the patrol boat in the calmer waters of the wake. As the vessels entered Pensacola Pass and neared the desired marina a second FWC vessel being operated by Officer Allgood cleared the entrance of other waterborne traffic. The owner was able to successfully recover the vessel on the trailer without further damage.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel GUARDIAN, Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Boyd and J. Hughes were on patrol approximately 11 miles offshore. They stopped a recreational vessel and located multiple gag grouper during federal closure. The appropriate action was taken for the violation.

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel GUARDIAN, Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Boyd and J. Hughes were checking commercial shrimping vessels. They stopped a vessel in nearshore waters and inspected their turtle excluder devices. The officers measured the vessel's nets and found them to exceed the maximum size of 500 square feet. The nets exceeded 2000 square feet and were seized as evidence. The appropriate action was taken for the violations.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

LEON COUNTY

Lieutenant Wass de Czege participated in a career day at the School for Math and Science in Leon County. Lieutenant Wass de Czege worked with Mr. Yuan from the Division of Habitat and Species Conservation, Invasive Plant Management Section, on

the project. Lieutenant Wass de Czege brought a truck, airboat, and an alligator, and talked about conservation law enforcement and boating safety. Mr. Yuan talked about invasive plants in Florida. The presentations were attended by approximately 100 kids from kindergarten through third grade.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

SUWANNEE COUNTY

Officer Fowler was targeting boating under the influence at the confluence of the Santa Fe and Suwannee Rivers during the Memorial Day weekend. The officer saw an individual on the nearby shore fall down several times and then enter a vessel where the individual fell again. The individual then began to operate the vessel away from the shore and was stopped and a boating safety check conducted. During the safety inspection, the operator displayed several signs of impairment and it was determined that the operator was boating under the influence. The operator was arrested and transported to the Suwannee County Jail.

GILCHRIST COUNTY

During the Memorial Day weekend Officer Ransom was targeting boating under the influence on the Santa Fe River. The officer conducted a boating safety check on a vessel where the operator displayed several signs of impairment. Further investigation determined that the operator was boating under the influence. The operator was arrested and transported to the Gilchrist County Jail.

CLAY COUNTY

Officers J. Barber and E. Barber were on water patrol with Lieutenant Haney on Black Creek for the Memorial Day weekend. They stopped a personal watercraft (PWC) operating at high speed through a no wake zone. The operator failed to stop initially but was eventually stopped by the officers. During the stop officers saw signs of impairment and conducted a BUI investigation. The subject was found to be impaired and arrested for BUI. He was transported to the Clay County Jail where he refused to provide a breath sample.

Officers J. Barber and E. Barber were on water patrol on Black Creek for the Memorial Day weekend and stopped a boater violating a no wake zone. During the stop officers saw signs of impairment and conducted a BUI investigation. The subject was found to be impaired and was arrested for BUI. He was transported to the Clay County Jail and two hours after the stop provided a breath sample measuring .073 g/210L.

Officer Heath and Lieutenant Haney were on water patrol on Black Creek for the Memorial Day weekend when they stopped a vessel for a boating safety inspection. During the stop, officers saw signs of impairment and conducted a BUI investigation. The subject was found to be impaired and was arrested for BUI. He was transported to the Clay County Jail and refused to provide a breath sample.

Officers J. Barber and E. Barber were on water patrol with Lieutenant Haney on Black Creek for the Memorial Day weekend. They stopped a vessel for a boating safety inspection. During the stop officers saw signs of impairment and conducted a BUI investigation. The subject was found to be impaired and arrested for BUI. He was transported to the Clay County Jail and refused to provide a breath sample.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

PUTNAM COUNTY

Officers Cheshire and Bernard responded to a complaint of two individuals digging up gopher tortoises from their burrows. An interview with the suspects revealed they dug up and sold three tortoises. Both subjects were cited for unlawful taking of the animals.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

During the holiday weekend, Officers Thomas and Lawrence were patrolling the Intracoastal Waterway Devil's Elbow slow speed zone. They stopped a vessel they saw violate the slow speed zone and the operator showed signs of impairment. The operator agreed to perform seated field sobriety tasks (SFSTs). After performing SFSTs, the operator was arrested for boating under the influence.

MARION COUNTY

Officers Simpson and Rice were checking recreational fishing along the Ocklawaha River when they saw a subject throwing a cast net. During a resource inspection, the subject had multiple panfish in a bucket. The subject admitted to the officers that he caught the panfish with the cast net. Officer Simpson recognized that he warned the subject less than a year ago for the same offense. The subject was issued a notice to appear for taking game fish by illegal method.

VOLUSIA

Officer Fletcher stopped a vessel on the St. John's River on Memorial Day weekend for violating a boating safety slow speed zone. During the stop, Officer Fletcher detected signs of impairment from the operator. Based on his performance of standardized seated field sobriety tasks, Officer Fletcher determined that the man was under the

influence of alcoholic beverages to the extent that his normal faculties were impaired. He was arrested and transported to the Volusia County Jail for boating under the influence. He provided breath samples of .145 and .142.

On Memorial Day weekend, Officer Edson saw a vessel operating on the St. John's River after sunset without navigation lights. He stopped the vessel and noticed signs of impairment from the operator. Based on his performance of standardized seated field sobriety tasks, Officer Edson determined the man was under the influence of alcoholic beverages to the extent that his normal faculties were impaired. The operator was arrested for boating under the influence and transported to the Volusia County Jail where he refused to provide a breath sample.

LAKE COUNTY

Officer Teal, Investigator Douglas and Lieutenant Chase were on water patrol near the Crooked River when they stopped a vessel and conducted a boating safety inspection. The officers noticed indicators of the operator being impaired during the boating safety inspection and administered seated field sobriety tasks. Based upon their observations, the subject was arrested for boating under the influence and booked into the Lake County Jail.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

PUTNAM COUNTY

Officers Bernard was on water patrol when he saw a vessel with six occupants taking on water. Officer Bernard, with the assistance of Officer Wester, was able to get all the occupants safely to shore without incident.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

MARION COUNTY

Officers participated in the annual Project Spring Clean that takes place in the Ocala Wildlife Management Area. Multiple agencies came together to make the event possible, to include: FWC, United States Forest Service, Marion County Solid Waste, and Lake County Solid Waste. This year participants collected a combined total of 60,760 pounds of illegally dumped debris from the Ocala Wildlife Management Area. Officers Simpson, Rice, Dias, Hayes, Chriest and Investigators Lasher and Sumpter helped with the cleanup.

ORANGE COUNTY

Officer Teal and Lieutenant Chase conducted an outreach on boating safety at the Orange County Sportsman's Club. Over 100 adults and children were in attendance.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Geeraerts and Officer Kobs were conducting water-based patrol on the Peace River during the Memorial Day weekend. The officers saw a vessel enter a slow speed zone at a high rate of speed. They stopped the vessel to address the speed zone violation and perform a boating safety equipment inspection. Throughout the inspection, the operator of the vessel had slurred speech and was unsteady on his feet. Officer Geeraerts asked the operator to perform seated field sobriety tasks. Based on the operator's performance, he was placed under arrest for operating a vessel while normal faculties were impaired and booked into the Charlotte County jail.

HILLSBOROUGH/PINELLAS

Over the Memorial Day weekend, officers from the Hillsborough and Pinellas North Coastal Squad were out in force ensuring that boaters were being safe on the water. Officers spent a combined eighty-five hours on the water, issued nine UBC's, thirty-six Boating Safety Warnings, issued five Boating Safety Compliance Stickers and made one B.U.I. case. In addition to their boating safety efforts, officers made eight misdemeanor arrests for varying offenses and two felony arrests for felony fleeing to elude and felony battery.

LEE COUNTY

Officer Winton responded to reports of a derelict vessel in Mullock Creek. Upon his arrival, it was determined that the involved vessel was sunken and was being stored in a derelict condition. Officer Winton located the vessel's owner at his residence and issued him a notice to appear for storing a derelict vessel upon the waters of the state.

Officer Winton responded to reports of a derelict vessel in Estero Bay. It was determined that the involved vessel was aground, sunken and being stored in a derelict condition. An investigation was initiated, at which time two responsible subjects were located. A third subject was found to have unlawfully transferred the vessel without a title. Charges pertaining to storing a derelict vessel upon the waters of the state and transferring a vessel without a title are being filed with the State Attorney's Office.

Officers Winton and Stanley responded to a boating accident in Big Carlos Pass. Upon arriving on scene, Officer Winton discovered that several subjects needed medical attention and transported them to nearby medical personnel where they were treated. At the end of the accident investigation, several citations were issued for violations of boating safety laws.

While on water patrol near Cayo Costa State Park, Officer Stapleton, Lieutenant Barrett, and Captain Carpenter stopped a rented pontoon boat to conduct a safety equipment inspection. During the inspection, the officers detected several signs of impairment and the operator was arrested for operating a boat while impaired. He was booked into the Lee County Jail and the boat was turned over to the rental company.

While on water patrol in Pine Island Sound, Lieutenant Barrett and Captain Carpenter saw a large boat in the Intracoastal Waterway displaying an intense forward-facing light which obscured its navigational lights and was blinding oncoming boat traffic. They stopped the vessel to address the violation and to perform a safety equipment inspection. During the inspection, the operator was displaying several signs of impairment. The officers had the operator perform field sobriety tasks. He was arrested for boating under the influence and booked into the Lee County Jail. His boat was turned over to a tow boat company.

MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Gonzales, Officer Dalton and Officer Infante were on water patrol near Long Boat Pass. They performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel transiting in the area. During the inspection, the operator of the vessel was showing signs of being under the influence of either alcohol or drugs. The officers performed sobriety tasks on the operator to determine his level of impairment. When they concluded the tests, the operator was arrested for boating under the influence of alcohol. He was taken to the Manatee County Jail and will have to appear in court for his violation.

Officer Dalton and Officer Davidson were on water patrol near Long Boat Pass. They stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel operating in the area. During the inspection, the operator of the vessel was showing signs of being under the influence of either alcohol or drugs. The officers performed sobriety tasks on the operator to determine his level of impairment. When they concluded the tests, the operator was arrested for boating under the influence of alcohol. He was taken to the Manatee County Jail and will have to appear in court for his violation.

Officer Gonzales, Officer Dalton and Officer Buckson were on water patrol near Long Boat Pass. They stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel transiting in the area. During the inspection, the operator of the vessel was showing signs of being under the influence of either alcohol or drugs. The officers performed sobriety tasks on the operator to determine his level of impairment. When they concluded these tests, the operator was arrested for boating under the influence of alcohol. He was taken to the Manatee County Jail and will have to appear in court for his violation.

Officer Gonzales and Officer Buckson were on water patrol near Long Boat Pass. They stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel operating in the area. During the safety inspection, the operator of the vessel was showing signs of being

under the influence of either alcohol or drugs. The officers performed sobriety tasks on the operator to determine his level of impairment. When they concluded the tests, the operator was arrested for boating under the influence of alcohol. He was taken to the Manatee County Jail and will have to appear in court for his violation.

Officer Gonzales was on water patrol near Long Boat Pass. He stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel he saw operating in the area. During the inspection, the operator of the vessel was showing signs of being under the influence of either alcohol or drugs. Officer Gonzales performed sobriety tasks on the operator to determine his level of impairment. When he finished the battery of tasks, the operator was arrested for boating under the influence of alcohol. He was taken to the Manatee County Jail and will have to appear in court for his violation.

Officer Davidson and Officer Klobuchar were on water patrol near Long Boat Pass. They performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel transiting in the area. During the inspection, the operator of the vessel was showing signs of being under the influence of either alcohol or drugs. The officers performed sobriety tasks on the operator to determine his level of impairment. When they concluded the tests, the operator was arrested for boating under the influence of alcohol. He was taken to the Manatee County Jail and will have to appear in court for his violation.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer Bibler and Officer Specialist Bibeau stopped a vessel returning from offshore to conduct a fisheries inspection. Officer Specialist Bibeau boarded the vessel and conducted the inspection. Officer Specialist Bibeau located two red snapper hidden in the anchor locker underneath the anchor and anchor line. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the operator of the vessel a misdemeanor citation for possession of red snapper during the closed season.

SARASOTA COUNTY

Officer Grenz and Officer Ridgway were on water patrol near the North Venice Jetty Park. They stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel operating in the area. During the inspection, the operator of the vessel was showing signs of being under the influence of either alcohol or drugs. The officers performed sobriety tasks on the operator to determine his level of impairment. When they concluded the tests, the operator was arrested for boating under the influence of alcohol. He was booked into Sarasota County Jail.

Officer Brown, Officer Hudson and Lieutenant Gerkin were on water patrol in the Intercoastal Waterway (ICW) in Nokomis near channel marker 18. They stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel transiting in the area. During the inspection, the operator of the vessel was showing signs of being under the influence of either alcohol or drugs. The officers performed sobriety tasks on the operator to determine his level of impairment. When they concluded the tests, the operator was

arrested for boating under the influence of alcohol. He was booked into the Sarasota County Jail.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Davidson and Officer Klobuchar were on water patrol working the area of Longboat Pass and Jewfish Key. They were alerted by the sound of an airhorn near the sandbar of Jewfish Key and were waved over by several occupants aboard an anchored vessel nearby. Officer Klobuchar navigated through the anchored vessels at which point the officers noticed several people treading water, holding onto an unresponsive female and trying to keep her face out of the water. The people informed the officers that they found the subject floating out in the channel unconscious. The officers were able to instruct the people to swim the subject over to the side of the vessel at which point Officer Davidson and Officer Klobuchar were able to hoist the unconscious woman into their vessel. Officer Davidson took control of the vessel and quickly navigated back to South Coquina Boat Ramp while Officer Klobuchar attended to the subject. The subject began showing some level of consciousness, began breathing and showing other signs of response after being placed in the proper recovery position. Within minutes they had arrived at the boat ramp and the subject was responding to verbal cues and questions. Manatee County Marine Rescue arrived on scene shortly thereafter and evaluated the subject. Once cleared medically, she was turned over to Bradenton Beach P.D. who contacted her family.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

LEE COUNTY

Officer Winton and Officer Price worked a directed conservation patrol by conducting speed enforcement in a local panther protection zone. During their patrol, the officers issued sixteen traffic citations and fourteen written warnings. The highest speed detected was 103 miles per hour in a fifty mile per hour zone.

MANATEE COUNTY

Over the holiday weekend, Officer Miller, Officer Infante and Lieutenant Hinds worked a directed conservation patrol to protect manatees in the slow speed zone east of the Ft. Hammer Boat Ramp. The officers were working the manatee slow speed zone in that area after receiving numerous complaints from home owners who live on the river. Over the course of the detail, the officers cited over a dozen vessels for violating the slow speed zone and wrote numerous other citations and warnings for safety equipment violations.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

Officer Lopez responded to a boating accident that occurred a couple miles offshore and east of the Port Everglades Inlet. He was able to contact both vessel operators who were at a marina in Dania Beach. One vessel was 106 feet in length and the other was 45 feet in length. Both vessels suffered considerable damage. Officer Lopez completed his investigation and issued a citation to one vessel pursuant to violation of navigation rules.

Officer Lopez contacted the operator of an illegally parked vehicle in Mizell Johnson State Park. While speaking with the operator of the vehicle, it was discovered that she had an active warrant out of Miami. Officer Lopez placed the individual under arrest for the warrant and Investigator Coffin transported her to the Broward County Jail.

Officers Sellers and Lopez conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle in Mizell Johnson State Park. The operator was given a criminal notice to appear for knowingly driving on a suspended license. The vehicle's tag was also seized, and the vehicle towed pursuant to an order for tag seizure.

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Hudson was dispatched to an internet crimes complaint involving two subjects catching an American crocodile. The officer was given a photo of the individuals posing with the crocodile tied up and a video of the two subjects releasing it. The subjects were located, and interviews were conducted. The subjects admitted to catching, transporting, and relocating the American crocodile. The subjects were cited accordingly for harassing American crocodiles.

Officers Hudson and Moss were conducting water patrol on Memorial Day weekend when the officers saw a vessel on plane violating the slow speed zone leaving the Sandbar in Martin County. During the stop, Officer Hudson could smell a strong odor of an unknown alcoholic beverage emitting from the operator's breath. Officer Hudson conducted standardized field sobriety tasks on the operator. The operator was placed under arrest for boating under the influence and was transported to the Martin County Jail where he submitted to a breath test. At the time of the stop, the operator had his year and a half old baby on board. The operator's breath test was .287g/210 and .285g/210. The operator was cited for boating under the influence with a breath alcohol level over .15 and a child under 18 on board and was booked into the Martin County Jail.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Ryan was on patrol in south western Palm Beach County. He saw a vehicle parked alongside a posted and fenced area of the Stormwater Treatment Area 2. He saw several individuals inside the posted area. Pursuant to a freshwater fisheries inspection, he issued one individual a criminal notice to appear for possession of over the bag limit of oversize black bass.

While on patrol, Captive Wildlife Investigator Toby saw an individual illegally entering an area to fish through a hole cut in a fence. Several individuals were on the property cast netting and keeping what they were catching. When approached, the individuals attempted to conceal the cast net in the bushes and separate the game fish that were illegally caught in the net from their legal catch. One misdemeanor citation, three infractions, and one warning were issued for the violations.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Toby responded to a complaint regarding the sale of wildlife online. The investigation revealed the individual selling the wildlife was not licensed to do so. One misdemeanor citation was issued for the violation, and information was provided on how to come into compliance for future transactions.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Schroer responded to a call about an adult leatherback sea turtle that was stranded on a sandbar in Tequesta. Five FWC sea turtle biologists boarded the FWC patrol vessel and were taken to the sandbar. The biologists took measurements of the turtle and found it to be uninjured. With the assistance of FWC sea turtle biologists, Loggerhead Marine Life Center interns and local civilians, the leatherback sea turtle was lifted onto the FWC patrol vessel. The sea turtle was transported by land to Jupiter Beach to be released.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officer Saavedra and Officer Bruder were on water patrol when they saw a vessel displaying fishing poles heading south toward the Rickenbacker bridge. They conducted a fisheries inspection which revealed 5 bags of skinless fillets in a cooler in the front of the boat. Two of the five bags were dolphin and the other three bags were skipjack according to the captain. The officers submitted specimens to the biologist for testing to determine the true identification of the skinless fillets. The captain was cited for having skinless fillets on board.

Captive Wildlife Investigators Fernandez and Landa completed an investigation regarding a lemur bite. The investigation revealed an individual had their lemur at an event and allowed a female to hold the animal. The lemur bit the individual on the wrist while she was holding it. The Investigators located the subject involved and inspected his facility where two additional violations were discovered. One misdemeanor citation and two warnings were issued for the violations. The owner of the lemur chose to relinquish ownership of the animal following this incident.

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Thompson and Investigator Hein were on patrol in Whale Harbor Channel. They saw a vessel with two individuals onboard and stopped it to perform a boating safety check. Officer Thompson noticed multiple signs of impairment from the operator and requested him to submit to field sobriety tasks. The operator was placed under arrest for operating a vessel with his normal faculties impaired. He refused to submit to a breath test and was transported to Plantation Key Jail.

Lieutenant Yetter and Officer Hoppe were on water patrol near Whale Harbor Channel when they saw a vessel leaving the sandbar. They conducted a vessel stop and Officer Hoppe saw signs of impairment from the operator. After completing seated field sobriety tasks, Officer Hoppe placed the operator of the vessel under arrest for BUI. The operator refused to provide a breath sample.

Investigator Hein and Officer Hoppe were on water patrol near Whale Harbor Channel when they saw a vessel leaving the Islamorada sandbar. They conducted a vessel stop and Officer Hoppe noticed multiple signs of impairment from the operator. After conducting seated field sobriety tasks, Officer Hoppe placed the operator of the vessel under arrest for BUI. The operator refused to provide a breath sample.

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Yurewitch, Oldsen, Conroy, and Stearns conducted inspections on marine sanitation devices (MSD) as part of a targeted enforcement action to help improve water quality in Collier County. Officers worked with members of the Collier County Sheriff's Office, Naples Police Department, and Marco Island Police Department to enforce rules and regulations pertaining to marine sanitation devices. Officers inspected vessels moored in Naples Bay, Marco Island, Goodland, and Port of the Islands. Officers from FWC inspected 22 vessels and found 5 violations pertaining to marine sanitation devices and the discharge of raw sewage into state waters. The officers also encountered other violations including expired registration, failure to register a documented vessel, navigation light violations, and interference with navigation. During the detail officers stopped and inspected several larger vessels returning from offshore fishing trips. Violations included undersize yellowtail snapper and undersize lane snapper. The officers will follow up with several vessels that were unoccupied and unable to be inspected. In total the officers from FWC issued 6 citations and 21

warnings. The officers also educated multiple people at local marinas who had questions about marine sanitation devices regulations.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

COLLIER COUNTY

While on patrol, Captive Wildlife Investigator Alford saw a car upside down in a swampy canal. He pulled over to investigate further and was able to hear a female screaming from inside the vehicle. He radioed for assistance, then entered the canal. He located one female inside the vehicle, breathing from a small air pocket on the floor board of the overturned vehicle. With the assistance of two Good Samaritans, he was able to remove the victim and get her to shore. Investigator Alford provided first aid for the victim's head injuries until further assistance arrived.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officer Washington of SRB attended an annual Career Day at Sabal Palm Elementary school. He taught students about the exotic wildlife trade and the importance of environmental stewardship. He spoke to over 100 students and faculty about a career in conservation law enforcement and boating safety tips.

Officer Stanton and Duty Officer Supervisor Collins attended a career day at Bunche Park elementary school. They conducted scenarios with the students and talked about their roles with FWC.

Officer Blanco joined other local agencies for an annual Water Safety Splash Day that featured educational information for children and adults of all ages. He helped with a pool safety presentation, mock drowning, CPR demonstrations and basic swimming lessons.

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Plussa spoke to a group of 75 stakeholders at the City of Marco Island's Green Industries Conservation Initiative. The event was designed to educate landscapers on the regulations and recommended practices to conserve threatened gopher tortoise and burrowing owl populations on the island. Having received educational materials from both burrowing owl and gopher tortoise biologists, Officer Plussa shared his working knowledge on the regulatory side of both imperiled species and answered questions from stakeholders and city police officials.