

Boating Safety Report



Staff Report
October 2, 2019



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

To brief the Commissioners on the state of the Division of Law Enforcement's boating safety enforcement and boating access improvement efforts.

This presentation will summarize the collective efforts of FWC DLE related to the boating enforcement captured in the Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Performance Report and the annual Boating Accident Statistical Report. Categories include, but are not limited to: water patrol, boating under the influence (BUI), boating accident investigation, uniform boating citations and warnings issued, and boating education. The presentation will also include the Division's boating access improvement efforts, including information on recent projects funded by the Florida Boating Improvement Program (FBIP) and the Boating Infrastructure Program (BIG).

Division: Law Enforcement

Authors: Colonel Curtis Brown and Major Rob Rowe

Contact Phone Number: 850-488-6253

Report Date: October 2, 2019

Photo Credit: FWC image

Boating and Waterways Section

Comprised of three program areas:

- Boating Safety & Education
- Boating Access
- Waterway Management



The Boating and Waterways Section is divided into three primary units:

1. Boating Safety Unit: Tracks and reviews statewide boating accident reports Creates the yearly Boating Accident Statistical Report Manages Boating Safety Education and Outreach Creates boating Safety ID Cards and manages the Temporary Certificate Program.

2. Boating Access Unit: Management of the FWC boating access grant program Florida Boating Improvement Program (FBIP) Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIGP). Tracks boat ramps statewide with the Boat Ramp Finder application manages 244 state owned boat ramps.

FBIP (FY2019-20): 15 projects awarded for \$3,000,278.00 in funding

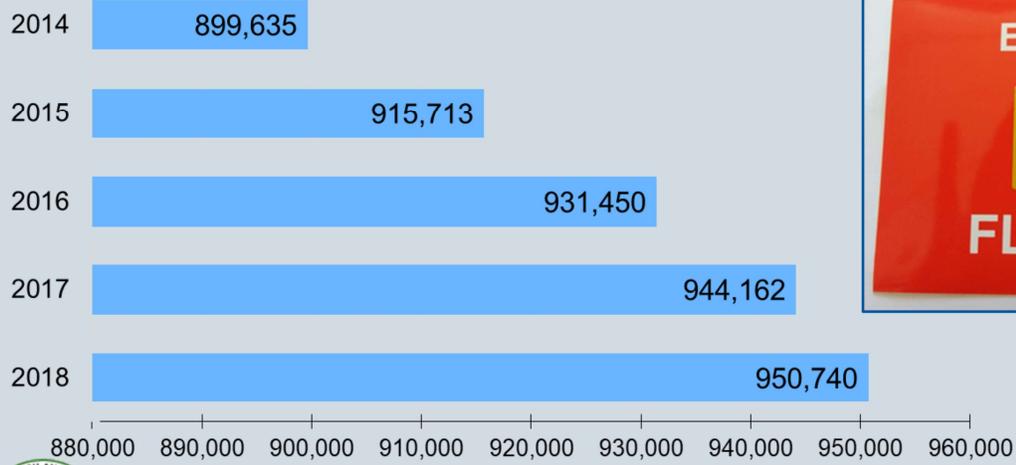
BIGP (FY2019-20): 4 Projects awarded for \$1,575,055.00 in funding

3. Waterway Management Unit: Waterway marker permit processing as well as the maintenance of over 10,000 regulatory markers and buoys statewide

Derelict Vessel Program: Program budget for FY2018-19 is \$1 million dollars. 15 Contracts issued to date for the removal of 41 vessels. Have \$627,414 left in the program for FY 2018-19.

Photo Credit: FWC image

Vessel Registrations (CY)



Our state has been experiencing an upward trend in vessel registration over the past five years. We continue to lead the nation in registered vessels with over 950,000 in 2018.

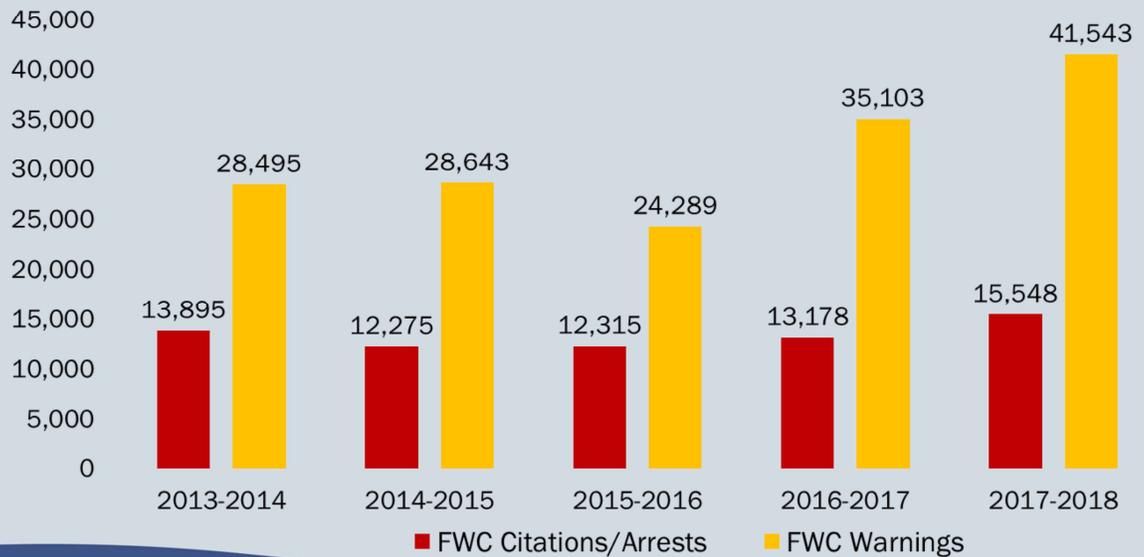
Waterborne Patrol Hours (FY)



Waterborne Patrol Hours have declined slightly over the last fiscal year.

Photo Credit: FWC image

Boating Citations and Warnings (FY)



This slide represents the increase in a strong educational approach to boating safety. These numbers show the overall outcome of these efforts, particularly the ratio of warnings to citations with over two warnings per citation issued.

Boating Under the Influence



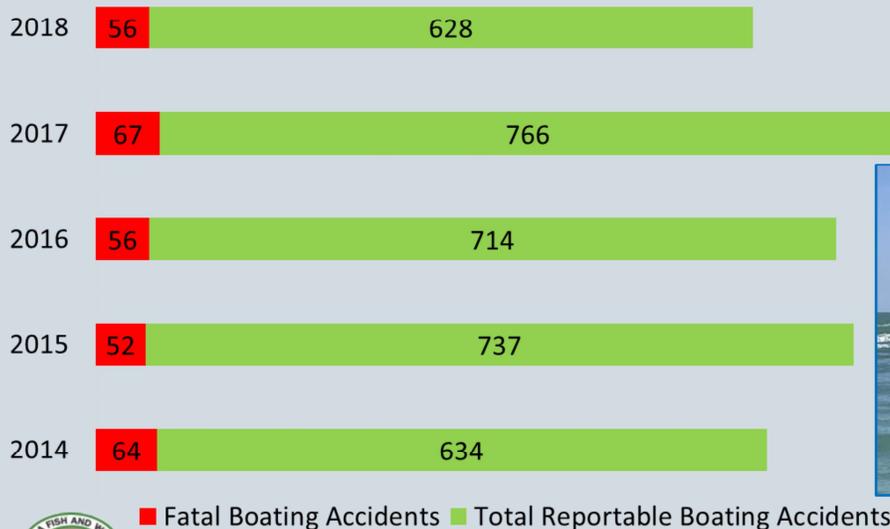
We take BUI enforcement very seriously, as there is a direct connection between our enforcement efforts and lives saved. As a part of our statewide strategy, we work special enforcement details during peak boating times. This includes working on holidays and working with other agencies to maximize our enforcement efforts.

This slide depicts our BUI related citations and represents the cumulative effort of the agency's BUI enforcement statewide.

The Boating and Waterways Section is currently conducting BUI training with State Attorneys to inform and improve state prosecutions. The section purchased four additional Intoxylizers to add to the agency's inventory, thus increasing the availability of them for officers.

Photo credit: FWC image

Boating Accidents (CY)



■ Fatal Boating Accidents ■ Total Reportable Boating Accidents

Even though the percentage of fatal accidents have remained the same, our overall accident number has decreased in 2018. This can be attributed to strong BUI enforcement and efficient utilization of boating safety statistics to identify boating safety enforcement needs.

Our state averages roughly 696 accidents per year over the last 5 years with an annual percentage of 7 -10% of those accidents resulting in fatalities.

Percentage of Fatal Accidents

| | |
|------|-----|
| 2014 | 10% |
| 2015 | 7% |
| 2016 | 8% |
| 2017 | 9% |
| 2018 | 9% |

Boater Safety Education (CY)



Temporary certificates issued have been continually increasing over the past few years; 2018 reflects a slight decline with 220,954 sold.

Boater education cards continue to gradually increase with 48,771 cards issued in 2018.

The temporary certificate program is available online.

Changes during the 2019 legislative session have made the temporary certificate valid for only 90 days. This change is meant to incentivize operators to take the full boater education course.

Photo credit: FWC image

Florida Boating Advisory Council

- Established by ss. 327.803 F.S.
- 18 Members
- House and Senate member on the Council
- Chaired by the FWC Director of Law Enforcement



The BAC membership covers a wide range of industry stakeholder groups as well as the general boating public. This is in addition to the Council's appointment of State Representative Jay Trumbull and State Senator Travis Hutson.

The Council meets on a biannual basis at the request of the Chair to advise the FWC and the Department of Economic Opportunity on issues affecting the Boating Community

Issues include:

- Boating and diving safety education
- Boating related facilities, i.e. marinas and boat test facilities
- Boat usage
- Boat access
- Working waterfronts

Recently, the BAC met on the issue of working waterfronts where they established a working group to evaluate the current condition of working waterfronts. In addition, they made suggestions on how to address issues relating to the establishment of new working waterfronts as well as the preservation of current working waterfronts throughout the state.

FWC Boating and Waterways is purchasing 120,000 "If Found" stickers in an effort to supply paddle craft operators throughout the state with a consistent and efficient means to identify a lost kayak, canoe, or stand-up paddle board, a scenario often associated with paddle craft accidents and search and rescues. This effort is a direct result of efforts to address non-motorized boat issues by the BAC.

Emerging Boating Safety Issues

- Congested Waterways
- Anchoring and Mooring issues
- Boating Restricted Areas



With the state's population increasing annually along with the number of registered vessels, the Boating and Waterways section has engaged the Florida Boating Advisory Council to begin working on solutions for user conflicts upon the state's waterways.

Photo: Columbus Day Regatta, FWC image



Leading the nation in safe and responsible boating through reasonable regulation, education, waterway management and access

