

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



*Patrol, Protect, Preserve*

**July 17, 2020 through July 23, 2020**

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

**NORTHWEST REGION**

**CASES**

**BAY COUNTY**

Officers T. Basford, N. Basford and Brady were on vessel patrol in St. Andrews Bay when they conducted a boating safety and resource inspection of a commercial charter vessel with six passengers on board. During the resource inspection of the vessel officers located 12 red snapper, of which three were undersized. The captain of the vessel was cited accordingly.

Officer T. Basford and Reserve Officer Cooper were on vessel patrol in St. Andrews Bay when they conducted a boating safety and resource inspection on a vessel with three people on board. During the resource inspection officers found three undersized red snapper and an undersized spinner shark. The captain of the vessel was issued citations for the violations.

**ESCAMBIA COUNTY**

Officers from the Pensacola Area BUI Squad and Escambia County officers teamed up to work the Escambia County waterways. Multiple boating safety citations and warnings were issued. Additionally, six arrests were made for boating under the influence. All individuals arrested were transported to the Escambia County Jail to be processed.

Officer Hicks and Officer Corbin were on patrol at Fort McRee when they stopped a vessel for a boating safety inspection. During the inspection the operator showed

several signs of impairment and Standard Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST) were utilized. The operator arrested for boating under the influence issued a uniform boating citation for insufficient number of life jackets.

While on water patrol at night Officer Hicks and Corbin were dispatched to a hit and run boating accident near Pensacola Beach. A short time later the suspected vessel was located and did not have a green navigational light. A vessel stop was conducted, and the operator exhibited signs of impairment. Standard Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST) were administered and the subject was arrested for boating under the influence. The subject was also issued a uniform boating citation for navigational lights not present or operational.

## GULF COUNTY

Senior Officer M. Webb was performing resource inspections at the Mexico Beach canal on vessels returning from the Gulf of Mexico. An inspection of a recreational vessel revealed several undersized king mackerel. The captain was cited accordingly.

While conducting a vessel inspection in the Mexico Beach canal Officer Lipford discovered three undersized king mackerel. The appropriate citation was issued.

Senior Officer M. Webb had been working on a high-profile derelict vessel investigation in Gulf County. The owner had evaded responsibility for several months. Senior Officer Webb used the Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) unmarked vehicle to successfully contact the owner and provided him with a derelict vessel notification letter, derelict vessel rights packet, and derelict vessel citation. The owner willingly signed the acknowledgment letter.

## OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers Hicks and Corbin received a complaint of a possible impaired operator on an anchored vessel in Cinco Bayou. The officers arrived at the nearby boat ramp and observed the vessel leaving the area very slowly. The subjects were instructed to come to the boat ramp and they complied, but continued very slowly and kept going in and out of the cabin of the vessel. A boating safety inspection was conducted, and the passenger appeared very nervous and continued to attempt to go inside the cabin of the vessel. Both subjects were checked through dispatch which confirmed the passenger had an active warrant for her arrest for possession of controlled substance. The subject was placed under arrest and during a search of her property drug paraphernalia was located. The subject was arrested on the warrant and charged with possession of drug paraphernalia.

Officers Hahr and Corbin were on water patrol when they conducted a vessel stop for a boating safety inspection in the Destin Harbor. During the inspection the operator exhibited signs of impairment. Standard Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST) were administered and the operator was arrested for boating under the influence.

Officers Hahr and Corbin were on patrol conducting resource inspections in the Destin Pass. A vessel stop was conducted on a fishing vessel and the inspection revealed undersized king mackerel on the vessel. One subject admitted to harvesting the king mackerel and was issued a notice to appear citation for the violation. Another subject on the vessel was unable to provide a fishing license and issued a citation.

Officers McVaney and Corbin were on water patrol when they observed a vessel being operated on plane in the idle speed/no wake zone. A vessel stop was conducted for the violation and a boating safety inspection was conducted. During the inspection the operator exhibited signs of impairment and was asked to perform Standard Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST). The operator was arrested for boating under the influence and was issued a citation for refusal to provide a breath sample and violation of the idle speed/no wake zone.

## **SANTA ROSA COUNTY**

Officer Ramos observed a vessel returning from an offshore fishing trip and stopped the vessel to conduct a safety and resource inspection. The four occupants were in possession of nine red snapper, exceeding their collective bag limit of eight fish. The operator was cited accordingly and issued a notice to appear.

Officers Ramos and Bower were patrolling local boat ramps and observed a vessel return from a fishing trip. A boating safety and resource inspection were conducted, and the group of men were found in possession of three bags of filleted fish, which the operator/captain of the vessel claimed were red snapper. The captain stated that he cleaned the fish nearby and was now dropping off the men along with their share of the catch. The officers explained that reef fish must be landed in whole condition, so officers are able to ensure compliance with applicable season, bag and size limit regulations and that it was unlawful to possess fillets of reef fish while transiting on the water. The vessel registration was also recently expired although the captain claimed he had just renewed the registration. The officers issued the captain a notice to appear citation for not landing the reef fish in whole condition, and a warning for the expired registration.

## **NORTH CENTRAL REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **DIXIE COUNTY**

Officer Specialists McDonald and Nichols were on water patrol in Rocky Creek when they conducted a boating safety/resource inspection on a vessel that was not displaying a registration decal. During the inspection, two red drum were located in a fish box with one being undersized. One subject admitted to catching both fish as the operator stated

he had not been fishing. The subject was cited for taking over the daily bag limit of red drum and taking undersized red drum.

## TAYLOR COUNTY

Officer Waychoff, along with Senior Officers Burnsed and Johnston were on water patrol in the Steinhatchee River when they noticed a vessel traveling out of the river. The officers conducted a vessel stop to check for boating safety compliance and noticed the operator showed signs of impairment. A boating under the influence investigation determined the operator was impaired. The operator was arrested and transported to the Taylor County Jail.

## **NORTHEAST REGION**

### CASES

#### ST. JOHN'S COUNTY

Officer Ramsey was on patrol in the Intercoastal Waterway and observed a vessel operated by a female with a male sitting beside her. The male was pointing and using hand gestures as if guiding her actions. The subjects pulled up to the shore next to a boat ramp and gave each other a high five. The male got up from the helm seat, and as he tried to step off the bow fell to the ground. Officer Ramsey contacted the individuals and performed a boating safety inspection. During the inspection the male subject exhibited signs of impairment and was asked to perform Standardized Field Sobriety Testing. The female at the helm did not have a boater's safety card and it was determined that the male was under the influence while giving instruction to the female on how to operate a vessel. The male subject was arrested for boating under the influence.

### COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

#### VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officers McDonough, Pelzel, and Van Nortwick put on a fishing clinic at the First Baptist Church in Daytona. Approximately 25 children attended. The participants had a good time learning basic fishing techniques, numerous fish were caught, and all were released. At the end of the event all the kids received a brand-new fishing pole and tackle box.

## **SOUTHWEST REGION**

### CASES

## HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Officer Caldwell observed a small vessel with two subjects on board returning to the Causeway Bridge. One of the subjects carried two fishing rods, a bait bucket and a tackle bag to the seawall and set it down. Officer Caldwell contacted the subjects and conducted an inspection. The tackle bag contained one spotted seatrout and two mangrove snapper. A measurement of the fish confirmed that they were all less than the legal-size limit. The subjects were cited accordingly.

Investigator Guerin was on land patrol near the Lower Hillsborough Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when he observed a vehicle parked along the trail. As he made a search of the area, he heard dogs barking and a group of hogs ran by in front of him. Investigator Guerin found two subjects with a group of dogs and a dead hog. Both subjects were issued numerous criminal citations and warnings for hunting with dogs in a WMA, hunting during a closed season and hunting in a non-designated area.

## PASCO COUNTY

Officer Petru and Officer Angelis responded to Anclote River Park in reference to a report of a single vessel boating accident that occurred at Anclote Key Preserve State Park. A person was injured after falling from a vessel and was transported by EMS to a local hospital for treatment.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer Conrad and Officer Enos observed an individual gathering items near a sandbar at the Skyway Rest Area Beach. The officers contacted the individual who was in possession of thirty-seven bay scallops, which are closed for harvest in Pinellas County year-round. The individual was cited accordingly. Officers Conrad and Enos also observed several other individuals walking along the shore collecting something. These individuals were found to be in possession of twenty-five bay scallops and were cited accordingly.

Officer Conrad and Officer Enos conducted a resource inspection on an individual spearfishing near the Skyway Bridge. The individual was found in possession of an undersized gag grouper and was cited accordingly.

Lieutenant Bibeau and Officer Specialist Caldwell stopped a fishing vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection. Lieutenant Bibeau boarded the vessel and located multiple plastic bags containing reef fish fillets. The individuals admitted that the fillets were mangrove snappers and the operator of the vessel was issued the appropriate citation for failing to land reef fish in whole condition.

Lieutenant Bibeau observed an individual actively fishing from a rock jetty. Lieutenant Bibeau watched as the individual began to pack up his belongings and contacted the individual as he was preparing to leave the area. A fisheries inspection found the

individual in possession of an undersized mangrove snapper along with an eleven-inch red grouper. Lieutenant Bibeau issued the individual the appropriate citation and warning for the fisheries violations.

Lieutenant Bibeau and Officer Conrad observed four individuals wading on a grass flat collecting marine life. They waited for the individuals to return to their vehicle and conducted a fisheries inspection. The individuals were in possession of 556 bay scallops. Lieutenant Bibeau issued the individuals misdemeanor citations for harvesting bay scallops in a closed area.

## **SOUTH REGION A**

### **CASES**

#### **PALM BEACH COUNTY**

Officer Brodbeck was dispatched to a complaint regarding fishermen keeping undersize snapper at the Lantana bridge. Upon seeing the officer, one subject ran to the end of the fishing pier and threw two undersize snapper back into the water. The subject was issued a resource citation for interference with an FWC Officer.

Officer Brodbeck was on vessel patrol near Boynton Inlet when a vessel was observed with three people on board actively fishing. A vessel stop was initiated to conduct a resource inspection. Upon seeing the officer, one fisherman ducked down at the rear of the vessel and threw two fish into the water. Officer Brodbeck recovered two dead bonefish from the water and returned to the vessel. Upon boarding the vessel, the officer found a third bonefish on the deck where the fisherman had been standing. A search of the vessel located two plastic bags containing 18 bonefish and two undersize mutton snapper. The vessel owner was arrested for possession of bonefish, possession of undersize mutton snapper, interference with an FWC Officer and was booked into the Palm Beach County Jail. A total of 21 bonefish and two mutton snapper were seized.

Officers Partelow and Brodbeck were on marked vessel patrol near Peanut Island when several people were observed on a privately-owned derelict vessel. Officer Brodbeck was familiar with the vessel's owner. The officers instructed all persons to get off the vessel, and most complied. One subject swam around the far side of the vessel and boarded the derelict vessel a second time after being warned. The officers attempted to contact the subject; however the subject swam away underwater, beneath several anchored vessels. Officer Brodbeck entered the water, brought the subject to the patrol vessel, and placed him under arrest. The subject appeared highly intoxicated and was charged with burglary of a conveyance, resisting arrest without violence, disorderly intoxication, and was booked into the Palm Beach County Jail.

#### **MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE**

## MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Hudson responded to a call from Martin County Sheriff's Office about a sea turtle that had been accidentally hooked by a young fisherman. The officer was able to remove the hook from the sea turtle. It was transported to Loggerhead Marine to be evaluated for other health issues.

## **SOUTH REGION B**

### CASES

#### MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officer Dunn has been focusing on illegal liveries operating at local boat ramps. Several livery inspections located three different illegal livery operations. Officer Dunn issued twenty misdemeanor citations for various livery violations.

#### MONROE COUNTY

Investigator Mattson was on unmarked water patrol when he observed a subject snorkeling near the rocks on the bayside of Channel 5 bridge. The subject was not displaying a diver down flag. A MCSO Deputy was on land and came to the subject to perform an inspection. The subject had dropped a speargun in order to evade detection by law enforcement. Spearfishing is not allowed in state waters of the Upper Keys. The subject had a long history of failure to pay traffic fines as well as a driver license that had been suspended indefinitely. Lieutenant Hein arrived on scene and transported the subject to Plantation Key Jail. The subject was charged with two misdemeanors for spearfishing in the Upper Keys and interference with FWC law enforcement and issued an infraction for no diver down flag.

### COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

#### MONROE COUNTY

PIO Dube and Recruiter Pestka were guest speakers at the Upper Keys Rotary meeting at Captain Craigs Restaurant in Tavernier. Officer Pestka gave an overview of the latest hiring qualifications and requirements for the FWC Academy. Officer Dube gave a presentation relating to the upcoming Lobster Sport Season and discussed current rules and regulations and boating and dive safety tips. The presentations concluded with a question and answer session with approximately 40 members.