

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



*Patrol, Protect, Preserve*

**August 7, 2020 through August 13, 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**

Officer Alsobrooks was patrolling in the area of Highway 388 east when he noticed a truck parked on the north side of the highway. He observed a subject leave the woods and enter the truck. This is a hunting lease area so Officer Alsobrooks contacted the subject to conduct a resource inspection. When he approached the truck, another subject came out of the same woods. While Officer Alsobrooks was talking with the subjects, he noticed a substantial amount of saw palmetto berries in the truck's bed. Both subjects did not have written permission to be on the property and neither had a permit to harvest saw palmetto berries. Both subjects were issued citations for being on the property without written permission and having no permit to harvest. Each subject was also issued a trespass warning.

Officers Hellett and T. Basford were on water patrol near the Panama City Pass when they observed a subject on the west jetty catch a large red drum and put it on a stringer. Officers Hellett and Gore returned to the west jetty by land and continued to observe the same subject who was still fishing. The subject was now joined by another subject. After observing the subjects for several hours, Officer Hellett contacted them to conduct a resource inspection. When Officer Hellett walked up and announced himself, one of the subjects tried to hide an orange bucket in the jetty rocks and untied the stringer from the rocks. Officer Hellett found the bucket which contained red drum fillets. He also recovered the stringer with two red drum still attached. Both fish were oversized. The subjects were charged accordingly.

## ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Senior Officer Specialist Clark was on foot patrol at Galvez Landing boat ramp when he observed a jet ski intermittently getting up on plane in a posted idle zone. Officer Clark gained the attention of the operator and motioned him to come to the dock. While conducting a safety inspection, Officer Clark observed the operator showing signs of impairment and Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST) were utilized. The operator was arrested for boating under the influence and transported and booked into the Escambia County Jail.

Senior Officer Specialist Clark and Officer Specialist Petty were on water patrol on the ICW near Galvez Landing boat ramp when they observed a vessel violating the idle speed zone. They initiated a vessel stop and instructed the vessel to dock at the nearby boat ramp due to traffic and safety reasons. Officers Clark and Petty contacted the operator and four passengers on the dock. While conducting a safety inspection, Officer Clark observed the operator showing signs of impairment. Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST) were utilized and the operator was arrested for boating under the influence and transported and booked into the Escambia County Jail.

## JACKSON COUNTY

Officer Humphrey was conducting fisheries inspections at Merritt's Mill Pond. He checked a fisherman that was in possession of seven undersized shellcracker bream. The fisherman was cited accordingly.

Officers received a complaint from a commercial crawfish fisherman that he had been having numerous traps stolen along Spring Creek and the Chipola River. They conducted a detail in which they witnessed two suspects emptying four of the complainant's traps. Lieutenant B. Allen received a call from the complainant who saw another suspect removing six of his traps from Spring Creek. Lieutenant Allen and Officer K. Baber responded and met with the complainant and suspect. The officers found that the suspect had pulled six of the complainant's traps, brought them to shore, and was possibly in the process of stealing them when he was confronted. After reviewing the incidents with an assistant state attorney, all three suspects were charged with fisherman harassment.

## OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers McVaney and Brown were on water patrol in the Destin Harbor when they observed an operator having difficulty docking a vessel. They contacted the operator to conduct a safety inspection and observed signs of impairment. Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST) were utilized and the subject was arrested for boating under the influence and booked into the Okaloosa County Jail.

Officer McVaney was on water patrol near the Destin bridge when he observed a pontoon boat violating the idle speed zone. Officer McVaney made a vessel stop to conduct a safety inspection and observed signs of impairment from the operator. Standardized Field Sobriety Tasks (SFST) were utilized and the operator was arrested for boating under the influence and booked into the Okaloosa County Jail.

Officer McVaney was on water patrol when he received a call about a vessel that crashed into a dock near Indian Bayou. The complainant advised that the vessel did not have anyone on it at the time of the crash. Officer McVaney responded along with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to the scene. Shortly after arriving, Officer McVaney and members of USCG heard someone yelling just to the west of their location in the Choctawhatchee Bay. They located an individual in the water unharmed and confirmed that the individual was the operator and only passenger on the vessel. It was later determined the operator was ejected from the vessel prior to the vessel striking the dock. Officer McVaney issued the operator a citation for careless operation.

## WALTON COUNTY

Officer Tison was on water patrol on the Choctawhatchee River when he encountered two subjects arguing after one accused the other of taking his bush hooks. Officer Tison determined there was no theft of any bush hooks. An inspection of one of the subject's bush hooks revealed they were baited with game fish (bream). The subject was cited accordingly.

Officers responded to three separate vehicle accidents in Point Washington Wildlife Management Area (WMA) to assist Florida Highway Patrol Troopers with investigating the traffic crashes. One driver was cited for careless driving and one was transported and treated for minor injuries.

## **NORTH CENTRAL REGION**

### CASES

#### CITRUS COUNTY

Officer Browning was on patrol in Homosassa Wildlife Management Area and observed three people walking toward the Hog Pond Road with backpacks. Officer Browning approached the three individuals and questioned one who had hidden his backpack when he saw the officer. It was later revealed the individuals were in possession of saw palmetto berries with more located in their vehicle. Officer Browning issued citations for possession of palmetto berries in a wildlife management area. Officer Browning seized 25 pounds of palmetto berries and donated them to the Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park to feed to the animals in their care.

#### CLAY COUNTY

Lieutenant Haney was on patrol at a boat ramp and observed a vessel returning to the ramp being operated erratically. Upon contacting the operator, Lt Haney observed numerous signs of impairment. There were both unopened and empty beer containers on the vessel even though none of the occupants were 21 years of age. The operator refused to submit to field sobriety tasks and was arrested for BUI. He was transported to jail and was charged with BUI and minor in possession of alcohol. He was appropriately cited for numerous boating violations as well as refusal to submit to a breath test.

## TAYLOR COUNTY

Taylor county officers received a call of five people missing from a vessel while they were gathering scallops. Officers Albritton, Martinez, Edwards, Nichols, Touchton, and Lieutenant Loyed all responded. The five divers were quickly recovered and reunited with their vessel with no injuries. It was later learned the vessel blew away from the divers because of a waterspout in the area.

Officer Touchton received information about an individual with fresh deer meat in a cooler. Officer Touchton arrived and interviewed the subject. Officers Albritton, Martinez, Wilcox, and Investigator McMillan arrived to assist. After concluding several interviews, another subject was identified that also was found in possession of fresh deer meat. The investigation revealed the two subjects shot and killed a seven point buck the morning prior and cleaned the deer in the second subjects back yard. The subject that shot the deer was a convicted felon and was booked into the Taylor County Jail. The deer meat was seized and donated, and a .22 caliber rifle was seized as evidence.

## **NORTHEAST REGION**

### CASES

#### MARION COUNTY

Officer Specialist Dias completed an in-depth investigation after receiving information related to a trophy deer that was harvested out of season. Using both digital forensics and DNA testing, Officer Dias reconstructed the events surrounding the illegal harvest. After presenting the evidence to the State Attorney's Office, a notice to appear was issued to the subject for taking deer during the closed season.

#### PUTNAM COUNTY

Officers Guirate and Carey were conducting fisheries inspections for shrimp season, when they checked the catch of an individual. The subject was found to have a bream hidden under the shrimp that was harvested by cast net. Additionally, it was found that

the individual was charged with the exact same offense last year. The individual was cited appropriately, and the bream was returned to the water alive.

## ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Officers Dodd and Thomas responded to a Facebook complaint regarding the illegal harvest of a lemon shark. An analyst positively identified the shark as a lemon shark from the provided Facebook photos. In an interview with the subject in the Facebook photos, the subject admitted to participating in the harvest of the protected species. He produced lemon shark fillets and fins. Three misdemeanor citations were issued for the related charges.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

## MARION COUNTY

Officer Specialists Dias and Rice were on patrol when they were notified of an overdue kayak with two people on board. Utilizing their knowledge of the area, the officers launched an airboat and began canvassing the area described by the caller. Shortly after initiating the search, the officers safely located the missing boaters who had become disoriented. Both were safely returned to the boat ramp.

## **SOUTHWEST REGION**

## CASES

## CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Lieutenant Ruggiero and Officer Salem were on land patrol when they located subjects on a closed road off a local management area. Lieutenant Ruggiero approached unnoticed and saw four people in the woods picking palmetto berries inside the management area. After speaking with the subjects, they learned one of the subjects had been issued two misdemeanors for berry picking violations in the same management area last year. The officers explained the management area rules to all the subjects and provided them with the appropriate regulations. Four misdemeanor citations and five warnings were issued.

Officer Salem received information from a hunter who told him some side-by-sides were driving around the management area on closed roads. Officer Salem and Lieutenant Ruggiero responded to the area. Lieutenant Ruggiero located fresh tire tracks entering the area and the two officers positioned themselves to intercept the side-by-sides. The side-by-sides were stopped as they exited the area. During the stop, an additional side-by-side came driving down the road. Also, another hunter came driving down the same road. All the subjects were educated about the laws and four warnings were issued for driving on closed roads. Officer Hazelwood observed a jeep driving off-road through

some fragile wetlands. As he approached from a distance away, the jeep hurried to get back to the roadway, but Officer Hazelwood was able to stop him as he exited the pond. The subject was issued a citation.

Officer Lejarzar assisted Charlotte County Sheriff's Office and the Florida Highway Patrol with a vehicle accident that occurred inside a wildlife management area. Two subjects were driving their jeep carelessly on a closed road when they rolled the vehicle and were injured. Fortunately, the jeep stopped right side up and the two subjects were able to limp and push the vehicle to safety where they received medical treatment for their injuries. Officer Lejarzar helped the trooper locate the crash site and the accident is being investigated by the Florida Highway Patrol.

Lieutenant Ruggiero was on land patrol when he observed a man and female subject walking inside a wildlife management area. As he parked his patrol truck and attempted to watch what the people were doing, the male subject came to the gate carrying something on his shoulder. When the subject looked up and saw Lieutenant Ruggiero, he quickly turned and disappeared into the bushes. Lieutenant Ruggiero located the man as he exited the woods onto a roadway. The man admitted he was picking palmetto berries and hid them in the bushes. The female subject came out of the woods and both subjects said there was a third person in the wooded area with them. Officers Perry, Lejarzar and Salem arrived to assist. The third subject was located and all three were questioned. Two subjects were charged with harvesting saw palmetto berries from the Webb Wildlife Management Area. They were also issued warnings for not having a day use permit, failing to have written permission from a landowner to harvest palmetto berries and for failing to enter and exit a wildlife management area from a designated entry point. Neither of the first two subjects had a valid driver's license and both had been previously charged with taking palmetto berries from a management area. Inside the vehicle, which belonged to the third subject, were more palmetto berries they intended to sell in Immokalee. The third subject was issued a misdemeanor for transporting palmetto berries without the required permit.

## HARDEE COUNTY

Lieutenant Cloud, Officer Franks, Livingston and Stephens responded to an airboat which sank on the Peace River. Officers worked with the Hardee County Sheriff's Office to recover the vessel and its contents.

## HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

While on water patrol in Tampa Bay near Courtney Campbell, Officer Pettifer observed a PWC operating at a high rate of speed in a no wake zone. Officer Pettifer conducted a vessel stop to address the violation and to conduct a boating safety inspection. During this interaction, Officer Pettifer noticed several signs of impairment and requested the operator submit to standardized field sobriety exercises. The individual was arrested for operating a vessel while impaired and booked into the Hillsborough County Jail.

While on patrol in Southwest Florida Water Management District property, Officer Pettifer and Rorer witnessed an individual crash his dirt bike. The individual was on a pedestrian trail after hours. The individual refused to give the officers his name or information and was subsequently detained. After running his fingerprints, the individual's identity was confirmed, and he was cited accordingly.

While patrolling the Courtney Campbell Causeway, Officer Caldwell observed two subjects wading in the water wearing headlamps and carrying buckets. Officer Caldwell contacted the subjects and initiated a resource inspection of the buckets. The inspection revealed several stone crabs in one of the buckets. The subject in possession of the bucket with the stone crabs was issued two resource citations for possession of stone crab during closed season and possession of stone crab in whole condition. He was also issued warnings for egg bearing crabs and undersized stone crab claws.

While on land patrol Officer Caldwell observed a vehicle parked off the side of the road at the Tampa Bypass canal. Officer Caldwell walked down to the canal to see if anyone was fishing and he observed an individual under the bridge near the water. Officer Caldwell waited for the subject to return to the vehicle to conduct a resource inspection. Three individuals walked up from the canal and returned to the vehicle. One of the individuals was carrying a blue bucket in one hand and a white bucket in the other. A resource inspection revealed an empty blue bucket and a wet cast net in the white bucket. The individuals informed Officer Caldwell that they had not caught any fish due to all the vegetation in the canal. Officer Caldwell finished the inspection and the subjects left the area by vehicle. Officer Rorer met Officer Caldwell and both officers conducted a search of the area to see if there was evidence of fish that were left behind. The officers discovered a red cooler with several freshwater gamefish inside as well as identification that matched the owner of the vehicle. Officers Caldwell and Rorer located the address and contacted the subject at his residence. The officers interviewed the subject and he admitted the cooler was his. The subject was issued a notice to appear citation for harvest of freshwater gamefish by illegal method.

## MANATEE COUNTY

While on patrol approximately three miles west of Egmont Key, Officers Conrad and Pettifer observed a vessel returning toward shore. They conducted a resource and boating safety inspection and found an individual in possession of an undersized red grouper. Appropriate citations and warnings were issued.

Officer Miller responded to a PWC accident in Anna Maria Sound. The rental PWC operator and passenger were juveniles. As the PWC approached the Manatee Avenue Bridge, it hit a wake, and which caused the vessel to hit the bridge. The operator had injuries and was released from the hospital after medical personnel ensured the injuries were not life threatening. The PWC rental company was found to have many violations and will receive a complete compliance visit to address the discrepancies.

## PASCO COUNTY

Lieutenant Parisoe was on land patrol in the Green Swamp West area when he had a vehicle pull up next to him with an operator that appeared impaired. The individual consented to field sobriety tasks, which were administered by Lieutenant Parisoe with the assistance of Officer Teal. The operator was arrested for DUI and transported to the Pasco County Jail.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

Officers Ferguson, Criswell, Pulaski, Burks, Caldwell along with Lieutenant Dallarosa, participated in an underage drinking detail at Honeymoon Island State Park. The park had been receiving numerous complaints concerning possible underage drinking on the north end of the beach and the subsequent littering of the empty beer cans and other trash among the mangroves and on the beach. Plain clothes officers identified sixteen persons who were drinking on the north beach, all under the age of twenty-one, and many under eighteen. The individuals ranged in age from fifteen to eighteen years old and were each issued a citation for the consumption of alcohol in a state park. All the juveniles' parents were called to pick them up and Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Senior Officer Pulaski administered a breathalyzer to all individuals who had driven to the park. Three tested over the DUI legal limit and were prevented from driving home while under the influence. In all, sixteen infraction citations were issued.

While on land patrol, Lieutenant Bibeau observed a fishing vessel return to a nearby boat ramp with three individuals onboard. He conducted a fisheries inspection and found the individuals in possession of eight red grouper, seven of which were undersized. Lieutenant Bibeau wrote the operator of the vessel a misdemeanor citation for the fisheries violations.

While on offshore water patrol, Lieutenant Bibeau stopped a fishing vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection. He boarded the vessel and located four undersized hogfish, one undersized red grouper and one undersized and out of season triggerfish. Lieutenant Bibeau issued the operator of the vessel a misdemeanor citation and warnings for the fisheries violations.

While on offshore water patrol, Lieutenant Bibeau stopped a fishing vessel and conducted a fisheries inspection. The inspection found the individuals in possession of two undersized red grouper, two undersized scamp grouper and one undersized hogfish. Lieutenant Bibeau wrote the operator of the vessel a misdemeanor citation and warnings for the fisheries violations.

While on offshore water patrol, Lieutenant Bibeau stopped a fishing vessel and conducted a fisheries inspection. The inspection found three large plastic bags filled with reef fish fillets. The operator of the vessel admitted that the fillets belonged to red grouper, red snapper and mangrove snapper. Lieutenant Bibeau wrote the operator of the vessel a misdemeanor citation for failure to land reef fish in whole condition and possession of red snapper during the closed season.

While on land patrol, Lieutenant Bibeau observed two individuals carrying fishing equipment, walking back to their vehicle. He contacted the individuals and conducted a fisheries inspection. The inspection found the individuals in possession of eighteen mangrove snapper, twelve of which were undersized. Lieutenant Bibeau issued the individual in possession of the fish the proper citation and warning for the fisheries violations.

Officer Petru responded to Seminole Boat Ramp regarding a boating accident that occurred where one vessel struck a moored vessel. The striking vessel left the scene; however, witnesses were able to identify the vessel. FWC officers found the vessel at a local business and Officer Petru responded and identified the operator. Several citations were issued for the violations.

Officer Swindell responded to a single vessel accident that occurred around Anclote Key Preserve State Park. An individual fell off the front of the vessel and sustained injuries. The boating accident investigation is ongoing and will be completed by Officer Swindell.

## POLK COUNTY

Officer Earls and Munkwitz were patrolling the Winter Haven Chain of Lakes conducting boating safety checks. They observed a subject trespassing on CSX railroad tracks which cross the Lake Shipp/Lake Lulu canal. The track is clearly marked with no trespassing signs. The officers contacted the subject and issued him a notice to appear for the violation.

## SARASOTA COUNTY

Senior Officer Ridgway responded to a PWC accident in the IWC by Blackburn Point. Three PWC's were traveling together with one PWC in front of the group by a significant distance. The second PWC increased speed to catch up. As the second PWC got close to the first PWC, the operator on the first PWC unknowingly turned into the second. The second PWC ramped over the first PWC causing injuries to the operator. The PWC's were rentals.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### HIGHLANDS COUNTY

While working a targeted enforcement conservation detail, Officers Karr and Franks, along with Pilot Brickman and Lieutenant Fugate, located three individuals who were illegally harvesting saw palmetto berries. Because of the increased interest of saw palmetto berries, they are considered a "commercially exploited plant" in the State of Florida. Lieutenant Fugate had received a call about a suspicious person parked along the road near a saw palmetto field. As Lieutenant Fugate located the individual, Pilot

Brickman assisted with aviation support and was able to find two other persons picking berries in other locations. The individuals were issued a total of five misdemeanors for trespassing and harvesting saw palmetto berries without a permit.

## **SOUTH REGION A**

### **CASES**

#### **BROWARD COUNTY**

Officers Dudas and Sellers were on late night water patrol in the vicinity of the Dania Beach Cut Off Canal. They observed a vessel that displayed dive gear and conducted a marine fisheries inspection. The inspection resulted in the owner of the vessel being issued a criminal notice to appear for possession of an egg bearing spiny lobster. The lobster was released back to the water alive.

Officer Dudas was on patrol at the 15th Street boat ramp in Ft. Lauderdale. He conducted a marine fisheries inspection on a vessel that had pulled into the dock. The inspection concluded with one subject being issued a criminal notice to appear for possession of an egg bearing spiny lobster. The lobster was released back into the water alive.

Lieutenant Laubenberger and Officer Dudas were on water patrol in the Intracoastal Waterway near the 17th Street Causeway bridge in Ft. Lauderdale. They observed a vessel returning from the ocean with rods and reels displayed. One individual on deck appeared to be filleting a fish. The officers conducted a marine fisheries inspection on the vessel. With information gathered, Officer Dudas issued one individual a criminal notice to appear for possession of undersize dolphin. The vessel had seven dolphins onboard of which four were undersized. The illegal dolphins were seized as evidence.

Officer's Harris and Seldomridge were on land patrol in Lauderdale-By-The-Sea when they observed a beach diver exiting the water. As they approached, they could see the diver had lobster harvesting gear and a catch bag in his hand. They contacted the diver to conduct a saltwater fisheries inspection. During the inspection they found that the diver had harvested an egg bearing spiny lobster and an undersized spiny lobster. The diver received two criminal notice to appear citations for the violations. The lobster was returned to the water unharmed.

Officer's Seldomridge and Harris were on patrol in the vicinity of Hillsboro Inlet when they observed a vessel returning from offshore with dive and lobster harvesting gear on board. They stopped the vessel to conduct a saltwater fisheries inspection and found seven spiny lobster. Five of the seven spiny lobster had puncture holes in the shell. The diver received two criminal notice to appear citations for harvesting spiny lobster using a device that punctures the shell and over the daily bag limit of spiny lobster. The illegal lobsters were seized as evidence.

Officers Harris and Seldomridge were on patrol when they received a call from FWC dispatch regarding a Deputy with Broward Sheriff's Office on the beach in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea with a subject in possession of out of season spiny lobster. The officers responded to the location and determined the subject had harvested the lobster while diving nearly a week before mini season opened. The subject received a criminal notice to appear for harvesting spiny lobster out of season. The lobster was returned to the water alive.

Lieutenant Brock was on water patrol when he stopped a vessel to conduct a saltwater fisheries inspection. During the inspection he found two undersized spiny lobster. The subject who harvested the lobster received a criminal notice to appear for harvesting undersized spiny lobster. The lobsters were returned to the water alive.

Lieutenant Brock was on water patrol when he stopped a vessel to conduct a saltwater fisheries inspection. During the inspection he found two egg-bearing spiny lobster. The subject who harvested the lobster received a criminal notice to appear for harvesting egg-bearing spiny lobster. The lobsters were returned to the water alive.

While on patrol in STA 2, Officer Tarr noticed two individuals fishing on the border of US sugar property. A resource inspection revealed 14 black bass. Eight of the 14 black bass measured over 16" in total length. Both individuals were issued citations for over the daily bag limit of black bass, and possession of more than one black bass measuring 16" in total length. Two fish were able to be released alive and the rest were seized as evidence.

While on patrol in STA 2, Officer Tarr noticed a vehicle with two individuals trespassing inside of the stormwater treatment area. Upon making contact Officer Tarr performed a resource inspection. The subjects were in possession of nine black bass, with eight black bass measuring more than 16" in total length. After running the subjects through dispatch, it was revealed that one of the subjects had an active warrant for dog fighting and was wanted for questioning in an active murder investigation. Officer Tarr cited both subjects for possession of more than one black bass measuring 16" in total length and for trespassing. Officer Tarr arrested the wanted subject and transported him to jail.

Officers Vacin and Kuester were conducting water patrol in the waters near the vicinity of Mizzel-Johnson State Park. They observed two subjects spear fishing near the jetty and attempted to speak to them. The subjects threw the speargun and fish they had in the water and one of the subjects attempted to evade the officers. The officers were able to retrieve a Hawaiian sling and two snook from the water. One of the subjects was arrested and charged with over the limit of snook, snook out of season, oversized snook, harvest other than hook and line, spearfishing next to a jetty and resisting without violence. The other subject was charged with diving without a dive flag.

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck was dispatched to a complaint from an FWC Biologist regarding two subjects unlawfully harvesting saw palmetto berries from the DOT right-of-way in Hobe Sound. With the description provided, the officer was able to locate the vehicle and subjects at the north end of Jonathan Dickenson State Park. A stop was initiated, and the officer observed approximately 200 pounds of saw palmetto berries in the rear seat of the vehicle. After being read their Miranda rights, both subjects admitted to unlawfully harvesting the berries. Both also stated they did not have the appropriate Department of Agriculture permit to harvest saw palmetto berries. The subjects were issued resource citations for the permit violation and the berries were returned to the resource.

## **PALM BEACH COUNTY**

Officer Brodbeck was on marked vessel patrol offshore of Juno Beach when a commercial lobster vessel was observed actively harvesting lobsters. A resource inspection revealed an egg-bearing female lobster in the vessel's live well. The owner of the vessel was issued a resource citation for the violation and the lobster was returned alive to the water.

Officer Riggs was on land patrol in Boynton Beach when he observed a subject cast netting in a freshwater canal. When Officer Riggs conducted a resource inspection, the subject was found in possession of one butterfly peacock bass and several bluegill all taken with the cast net. The subject did not possess a valid freshwater fishing license. The subject was issued the appropriate citations and the peacock bass and bluegill were returned to the water alive.

Officers Spirito, Moss, Partelow and Trawinski were patrolling offshore and conducted several fisheries inspections. While most vessels were found in compliance, a vessel returning from Bahamas had multiple snapper/grouper fillets without skin attached as required by law. The occupants were educated on applicable rules and laws and cited accordingly.

Investigator Carroll and Officers Defeo and Rea responded to the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area after receiving a call about possible illegal removal of saw palmetto berries from the area. The officers located a large rental box truck full of illegally harvested berries. One individual was arrested on scene and further charges on separate individuals are pending.

## **SOUTH REGION B**

### **CASES**

#### **MIAMI DADE COUNTY**

Officer Cartaya was on water patrol near the Miami Marine Stadium when he spotted a PWC make a sharp left turn which caused the passenger to be ejected from the

watercraft. He conducted a vessel stop to ensure compliance with boating safety regulations and to conduct a welfare check. Upon observing signs of impairment from the operator, he proceeded to administer standard field sobriety tasks. The operator was arrested for BUI and transported to jail.

Officer Cartaya was on land-based water patrol when a Miami-Dade marine patrol officer contacted him about possible livery violations at the 79th Street boat ramp. When Officer Cartaya responded to the scene, he contacted a subject on a PWC. That subject stated he was visiting from New York and rented the PWC for the day. Moments later, the owner of the PWC arrived at the boat ramp and showed Officer Cartaya a smartphone application she used to rent out her privately owned jet ski. The subject was educated on the rules related to livery operation and cited for several livery violations.

## COLLIER COUNTY

While working water patrol Officers Conroy, Tafoya and Coger conducted a resource inspection on a vessel that had recently been offshore spearfishing. During the inspection, an undersized hogfish, an undersized black grouper, and three undersized lobster tails were discovered. After further investigation and interviewing the individuals on board, two of the subjects admitted to harvesting the undersized regulated species. Officer Conroy cited them appropriately.

Officers Conroy, Tafoya and Coger were working land patrol when they observed three individuals fishing from a local bridge. One of the fishermen put a small snapper on his hook and casted it out for bait. Officer Conroy contacted the fisherman and conducted a resource inspection. Eighteen snapper were discovered hidden under coolers and dirt. Nine of the snapper (mangrove and schoolmaster snapper) were undersized, and the fisherman was over his bag limit. Officer Conroy cited him appropriately.

Officers Conroy, Tafoya and Coger were working land patrol and observed three individuals fishing illegally from the top of a bridge. The officers conducted a resource inspection and discovered five undersized mangrove snapper. Officer Coger cited the subjects appropriately.

While Officer Specialist Plussa and Officer Neal were working the Mini Lobster Season, they observed an individual unlawfully snorkeling without a dive flag. The individual was lobstering within 300 feet of the Monroe County shoreline and within the city of Marathon under Vaca Cut Bridge. He was in possession of 15 spiny lobster, over the six per person per day bag limit, and five were undersized. He was cited accordingly for the violations.

While on patrol, Officer Specialist Plussa and Officer Neal checked an individual lobstering under the Vaca Cut Bridge. He had been checked twice before during the two-day mini season. He was found in possession of multiple undersized lobster and was cited accordingly.

Officer Specialist Plussa and Officer Neal were on patrol and observed an individual unlawfully lobstering within 300' of Monroe County shoreline and within the city of Marathon, at the closed Quay Boat Ramp. Further investigation revealed the subject in possession of an undersized lobster and he was cited accordingly.

Officer Georgevich and Investigator Carroll received information regarding an individual operating an illegal jet-ski livery. Investigator Carroll and Officer Georgevich contacted the individual who was actively renting his jet-ski to a paying customer. The officers conducted a livery inspection and the individual was unable to provide any of the necessary documentation, equipment, or proper safety gear. The inspection resulted in multiple criminal citations and infractions.

Officers Stearns and Georgevich responded to a call involving two subjects picking saw palmetto berries. When the officers arrived, they observed two individuals loading gear into a truck, preparing to leave the area. The officers contacted the individuals and neither had permits to harvest. The subjects possessed two bags of palmetto berries which were seized, and the appropriate citations were issued.

While on patrol at Lake Trafford, Captain Laskowski observed two individuals on a vessel actively hunting alligator. One of the individuals caught an alligator using a fishing pole and weighted treble hook. He brought the alligator alongside the vessel while the second individual attached a restraining line and dispatched the alligator using a bang stick. A resource inspection revealed the individual who initially caught the alligator did not possess the required alligator trapping agent's permit. He was cited for actively participating in the harvest of an alligator without the required permit.

## MONROE COUNTY

Officer's Brown, Cobb and Sapp responded to a grounded vessel on Knight's Key Shoal near the Seven Mile Bridge along with USCG Marathon. When they arrived on scene, officers observed the vessel operating recklessly with several subjects in the water pushing the boat off the flat. The vessel continued to operate that way for close to half an hour before working itself free. Contact was made for a boating safety inspection and the operator showed signs of impairment. Field sobriety tasks were conducted, and the operator was arrested for boating under the influence. The operator was cited accordingly and transported to the Stock Island Jail.