

FWC

Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report



February 16, 2018 through February 22, 2018

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.

Patrol, Protect, Preserve

NORTHWEST REGION

CASES

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Land was on patrol at Pensacola Beach conducting resource inspections and approached an individual who was surf fishing on the beach. A large tail was protruding from a five-gallon bucket filled with water near the subject. The red drum was over the maximum size of 27 inches. The fish was released to the water and the subject was issued a citation for the violation.

Officer Pettey received information that an individual shot an illegal short horned buck and posted it on Facebook. During an interview, the individual admitted killing the deer. The deer antlers measured 8 inches, short of the 10-inch minimum. The deer was seized and donated to a local charity. The subject was issued a notice to appear citation for the violation and for not having a hunting license.

Lieutenant Hahr was patrolling the Escambia River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when he observed two campers at the Mystic Springs Campground. While talking to them, he smelled the odor of cannabis and subsequently discovered a small amount of cannabis and a pipe. While detaining both subjects, they became uncooperative. While Lieutenant Hahr was handcuffing the man, his girlfriend ran to the truck and locked herself inside after being told to stop several times. The woman was removed from the truck and arrested for resisting arrest without violence. A search of the truck revealed more cannabis and paraphernalia along with two forms of heroin, psilocybin mushrooms, unknown pills, and another unidentified substance. Both subjects were

charged with possession of controlled substances and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Investigator Livesay was dispatched to a mobile home park regarding trespassing and illegal trapping. A subject admitted to trapping on the vacant property adjacent to the mobile home park. The property is owned by the U.S. Navy and the subject stated he did not have permission to set up traps on the property. The subject admitted to trapping two raccoons, a beaver, and a fox using steel leg hold traps. Two traps were removed from the Navy property and one from the mobile home park. The subject did not possess a trapping license and was issued two citations for possession of a fox without a permit and taking nuisance wildlife using steel leg hold traps.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Officers Nelson and Travis were conducting resource inspections of individuals fishing in Eastpoint. During an inspection, the officers found two individuals to be in possession of 14 spotted sea trout, four over the limit and six were undersized. The appropriate action was taken for the violations.

HOLMES COUNTY

Officer Greene responded to a complaint of illegal road hunting in western Holmes County. The complainant got the tag information and passed it along to the officer. After a short interview, the subject admitted to shooting from the roadway. Appropriate charges were filed through the State Attorney's Office.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Bartlett was on land patrol at Joe's Bayou boat ramp in Destin. The officer observed a pontoon boat returning to the ramp after sunset operating with a nonfunctional portside navigation light and displaying an expired Alabama vessel registration. During a subsequent boating safety inspection, the operator could not produce the registration, but explained he had purchased the boat in June 2017. Officer Bartlett explained the law requires that the new owner, within 30 days from the date of purchase, must transfer the vessel title into his name. The individual was issued a notice to appear citation.

Investigator Molnar was working night hunting activity on a county maintained road which passed through Eglin Reservation. A pickup truck slowed down while the passenger displayed a LED light into an open field in a manner capable of disclosing the presence of deer. Investigator Molnar followed the vehicle for about ½ mile and conducted a traffic stop. A pump action 12-gauge shotgun was located between the passenger side door and the seat along with five 00 buck shotgun shells. An LED flashlight was also located in the center console and there was dried deer blood and hair in the bed of the truck. After speaking with the subjects, it was determined they were attempting to take deer with a gun and light. Appropriate citations were issued.

Eglin Range Patrol also cited the subjects restricting them from using the Eglin Reservation for three years.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officers Jones and Mullins were on foot patrol in a closed area of the Eglin Reservation. The officers encountered a subject dressed in camouflage and armed with a muzzle loading deer rifle. The subject was issued a notice to appear in criminal court for the offense of hunting in a closed area. The subject's information was also referred to Eglin Range Patrol for action on his Eglin permits.

Officer Lewis was on forest patrol near Blackwater River State Forest when he observed a truck with a dog box parked at the gate where he had checked subjects in the past. He approached the vehicle and observed a man in the driver seat and a woman in the passenger seat. The man appeared to be trying to conceal something between the seats. Officer Lewis asked the man if they owned the property they were on, or if they knew who the owner was, and he said they did not. Officer Lewis searched the truck and subsequently found a medicine bottle containing three small baggies that appeared to contain methamphetamine, a glass smoking device with methamphetamine, and prescription narcotics. The man told him that the bottle contained methamphetamine, Percocet, and Hydrocodone, and that he smoked meth earlier that day. Officer Lewis arrested the man and charged him with three felony counts of possession of a controlled substance without a prescription and possession of drug paraphernalia. He was transported to the Santa Rosa County Jail without incident.

Officer Lewis was on forest patrol at Bear Lake when he observed a subject fishing from a pier. The subject had kept a variety of fish. Upon request, the subject could not produce a valid freshwater fishing license. While the officer was copying the man's vehicle tag number, the man stated that the tag did not belong on the vehicle, and he had attached it to the vehicle. While conducting his inspection, Officer Lewis observed a backpack in the truck that the man stated was not his. When asked about it, the man stated that it contained methamphetamine. Officer Lewis searched the backpack and discovered a soda bottle that had methamphetamine cooking inside of it, known as a one-pot. Officer Lewis contacted the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office narcotics unit to safely handle the substance. The narcotics unit arrived on scene and neutralized the substance. Officer Lewis arrested the man and charged him with manufacturing methamphetamine. He transported him to the Santa Rosa County Jail. The subject was also issued a citation for fishing without a license.

WALTON COUNTY

Officers Bradshaw and Letcher completed an investigation involving a deer that had been reported as being a legally taken buck which had been processed and placed in a cooler. When parts of the deer were inspected, the officers knew it was not consistent with a legally taken deer due to the size. After multiple conflicting interviews, the subject in possession of the meat admitted it was an antlerless deer. The subject responsible

for shooting the deer was later identified. Both subjects were charged for taking/possession of an antlerless deer.

Officer Tison began a derelict vessel investigation after observing a vessel that was partially submerged in Hogtown Bayou. The owner had previously been cited for failure to transfer the title. It was later determined the owner of the vessel was in the Walton County Jail for an unrelated violation. Officer Tison met with the subject and discussed options for correcting the issue with his vessel. He was charged for a having a derelict vessel on the waters of the state.

WASHINGTON COUNTY/HOLMES COUNTY

Officers worked a detail over the weekend focusing on areas where complaints of night hunting have been received. Officers Gore, Hayes, and Coker observed a vehicle illuminating a field in a manner capable of disclosing wildlife. After a traffic stop, they discovered the driver in possession of a firearm. The subject was issued appropriate citations for the violation.

Officer Gore was on patrol when he heard a gunshot. He coursed the shot, went to the area and located a parked vehicle. A brief time later, a subject in camo with a gun approached. Officer Gore identified himself and asked what he shot. The subject stated a coyote. Further investigation of the hunting stand and area revealed a freshly harvested doe deer. The subject was cited for taking an antlerless deer out of season.

SEARCH & RESCUE

BAY COUNTY

While on patrol, Officer Basford and Reserve Officer Cooper saw what appeared to be a man struggling in the water inside one of the sandbar breakers off St. Andrews Beach. They approached and found an older gentleman struggling to hold onto an overturned 16-foot vessel. The vessel was caught inside the breakers, which caused it to roll. The officers positioned their vessel inside of the rolling breakers and safely retrieved the man from the turbulent water. The man was shaken and cold, but did not receive any injuries. Preliminary findings revealed the subject was trolling outside of the breakers when a large wave capsized his vessel, only 5 minutes before the officers found him.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

TAYLOR COUNTY

Officer Robson was on patrol at Yates Creek boat ramp, checking fishermen as they landed their vessels. During an administrative resource inspection of a commercial air

boat, subjects were found to be in possession of saltwater fish and a seine net not properly marked at each end, wrapped in a tarp on the floor of the boat. The subjects admitted to net fishing. The owner received a citation for not properly marking each end of the seine net.

DUVAL COUNTY

Officer Shearer responded to a complaint about a subject keeping undersized redfish at Talbot Island State Park. Arriving at the fishing pier, he found two subjects fishing and conducted plain clothes surveillance. One of the men caught a small redfish, looked around and dropped it into his tackle box. Officer Shearer approached the subject and located two more small redfish in the area. The subject admitted to keeping the fish and was issued the appropriate citations and warnings.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

FLAGLER COUNTY

Officer Meade received an early morning phone call from a Flagler County Sheriff's Deputy about possible night hunting in west Flagler County. At the site, tire sign was found from a truck that had pulled off the road next to a pasture. The owner of the pasture had gotten the tag number of the truck. Later in the day, Officer Meade and Lieutenant Dack investigated and interviewed three individuals – two adult males and one juvenile female. The three had pulled over and while the female shined a light into the pasture, one of the males attempted to shoot at a deer standing in the pasture with a 22-250 rifle. All three gave written statements to the fact, and with the written statement from the deputy of what he observed, Officer Meade filed charges on all three for night hunting and shooting from a road right of way.

SUMTER COUNTY

Officer Scrambling received information about a Wildwood man that was feeding, catching, and skinning alligators and keeping them in his freezer. The subject was interviewed at his residence. A consensual resource inspection was conducted and two small American alligators were found in a deep freezer located on the carport. The subject was cited appropriately for the violation.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer Sapp and Officer Edson were on water patrol on Lake George when they stopped a vessel for violating the slow speed zone at the south end of the lake. During the stop, the officers detected a strong odor of an alcoholic beverage coming from the operator and observed numerous signs of impairment. The operator became hostile and

began to swear at the officers. After their investigation, the officers determined that his normal faculties were impaired and arrested him for boating under the influence (BUI) and he was transported to the Volusia County Jail.

PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Bernard was conducting fisheries inspections at Rodman Dam and checked a subject's catch. The subject was in possession of four black bass, two of which were over 16 inches. The subject was issued a citation for possessing more than one bass over 16 inches in length.

Officer Bernard was conducting fisheries inspections at Rodman Dam and checked a subject's catch. The subject was in possession of five black bass, all of which were over 16 inches. The subject was issued a citation for possessing more than one bass over 16 inches in length.

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Investigator McKinney responded to a single vehicle all-terrain vehicle (ATV) accident that occurred in Bull Creek WMA. A 38-year-old male was operating an ATV on the East Loop Road. For an undetermined reason, he lost control of the machine and flipped it. He was found by friends off the roadway unconscious, next to the upside-down vehicle. The man was transported to Holmes Regional Hospital where he is currently listed in critical condition. The case is being worked as a motor vehicle accident.

BREVARD COUNTY

Officers Eller and Hallsten were conducting fisheries patrol in the Atlantic Ocean out of Port Canaveral and were checking recreational vessels for compliance with all state and federal saltwater fisheries regulations. While checking vessels, the officers noticed one vessel acting unusually. When the officers approached this vessel to conduct a check, the vessel accelerated in the opposite direction. Officers intercepted the vessel and conducted a stop. Officers noticed fishing gear on board and asked if there was any fish on board. The operator told officers that he had "gotten skunked today" and that he did not have any fish. A resource inspection revealed an undersized and out of season red grouper. The violator was issued a citation for the violation.

RESCUES

LAKE COUNTY

FWC received a call that an 80-year-old man from the United Kingdom was missing and that his vehicle had been located in Richloam Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Officer Teal had previously run the tag after the Florida Forest Service had reported it stuck in a mud hole. At the time there were no signs of foul play and no reports of a missing person. Officers Teal and Phillips arrived on scene and immediately located foot sign

leading away from the vehicle. FWC Officers from Hernando, Pasco, Lake and Polk Counties were also enroute, along with personnel from the Florida Forest Service and Lake County Sheriff's Office. The man had been following his GPS directions which lead him through the heart of the Richloam WMA. The roads within Richloam are very rough and difficult to travel even with a 4x4 vehicle. The man had become stuck very late the night before and wound up spending the night in his car and set out on foot the next day looking for a way out. The officers began following the foot sign for several miles leading through the heavy thick woods. The foot sign crossed a fence into Green Swamp West WMA and continued. The officers meticulously followed the foot sign, losing the trail several times only to pick it back up because the man had a slight limp and would drag his foot every so often. They followed him to a road, but instead of turning left which would have been an easy route to civilization the man turned right headed into a heavily wooded area. After several miles of tracking, the officers found the man lying on the ground next to the road. He was severely dehydrated, but otherwise unharmed. The man was taken to the hospital where he was treated and released. Thanks to the tracking skills and persistence of these two officers the man was located alive and well.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

While on patrol at the Lowery Park Boat Ramp, Officer Rorer observed a vessel returning to the boat ramp. The operator repeatedly had trouble loading the vessel onto the trailer at the boat ramp. During the process, he nearly backed into a second vessel waiting their turn to use the ramp. During a boating safety inspection, Officer Rorer detected signs of alcohol impairment coming from the operator. Standardized seated field sobriety tasks were administered. Based on Officer Rorer's observations, the operator was arrested for operating a vessel while impaired by alcohol. He was transported to the Hillsborough County jail where he submitted to a breath test. Both breath samples were over the legal limit of .08.

LEE COUNTY

Officers Thompson and Hargrove were patrolling late one night when they spotted a commercial fisherman returning to the dock. They were familiar with this subject because he had recently been convicted of the use of monofilament gill nets in state waters and was currently on probation. When the officers inspected his catch, they found nine sharks on board. The sharks were harvested with nets, an unlawful method of take, and he was eight sharks over his bag limit. The subject was arrested for the shark violations along with a violation of his probation curfew.

While patrolling the waters late one night, Officers Hardgrove and Stapleton spotted a small boat operating in shallow water. When they heard the two people on board using a cast net, they stopped the boat for a resource inspection. When they smelled a strong odor of burnt marijuana, they began a search for additional contraband. One of the subjects on board was found to be in possession of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and multiple prescription medications. He was arrested for the drug charges and resisting arrest.

PINELLAS COUNTY

While on land patrol at the Tierra Verde Bridge, Officer Bibeau observed two individuals that were actively fishing. A resource inspection revealed six undersized mangrove snapper, one undersized sheepshead, one whole stone crab, and one undersized stone crab claw. One of the subjects admitted to catching all the fish, and was written a misdemeanor citation and multiple warnings for the fisheries violations.

While on land patrol near Gandy Beach, Officer Martinez noticed a large group of people huddled around a truck and vessel at the water's edge. As Officer Martinez approached the group one of the subjects began to throw fish back into the water. Inside the vessel was legal fish. He continued his inspection and asked about a large cooler in the bed of the truck. Officer Martinez was given permission to search the cooler and found eight snook, one redfish, and one sheepshead hidden underneath a pile of mullet. All eight of the snook were undersized and out of season – the redfish and sheepshead were both undersized as well. After interviewing the group, three subjects admitted to cast-netting all the fish. The subjects were cited for possession of snook out of season, possession of undersized snook, taking snook by illegal method, possession of undersized redfish, and possession of undersized sheepshead.

While driving over the Tierra Verde Bridge, Officer Martinez noticed a subject fishing the bridge watching him intently as he passed by. Officer Martinez kept driving, parked his truck out of sight, and then watched the subject from a concealed position. As the subject and another man returned to their vehicle, Officer Martinez approached and initiated a resource inspection. The subjects were found to have one out of season and undersized gag grouper, as well as six undersized mangrove snapper. The subjects were cited accordingly for their violations.

Officer Ferguson was on patrol at Honeymoon Island State Park when he observed a subject carrying fishing equipment down the beach. Officer Ferguson initiated a resource inspection and found two red drum underneath a cast net in a bucket. The subject was over his daily bag limit of red drum and cited accordingly.

Officer Bibler was on water patrol offshore of St. Pete Beach. He observed a fishing vessel coming in from offshore and stopped the vessel to conduct a resource inspection. Upon inspecting the catch, the captain was in possession of an American red snapper. The subject was cited for possession of American red snapper out of season.

Officer Bibler was on water patrol offshore of Pass-a-Grille when he observed a fishing vessel coming in from offshore and stopped the vessel to conduct a resource inspection. During the inspection, the subjects admitted to catching and keeping a variety of fish. One subject admitted to catching a greater amberjack and Officer Bibler informed him that it is currently prohibited to take greater amberjack due to the season being closed. The subject was cited for the violation.

While on land patrol at the Gandy Beach, Officer Martinez observed a subject fishing from the beach and approached to conduct a resource inspection. The inspection revealed the subject was in possession of nine mangrove snapper (four over the daily limit), six of which were undersized. The subject was cited for possession of undersized mangrove snapper and warned for over the bag limit.

While on land patrol at the Dunedin Causeway, Officer Bibeau observed three individuals returning to their vehicle carrying miscellaneous fishing equipment. A resource inspection revealed two undersized gag grouper. The subject was issued a misdemeanor citation for possession of undersized gag grouper and harvest of gag grouper during closed season.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

LEE COUNTY

Officers Hardgrove, Thompson, Stapleton, and Lieutenant Barrett participated in a multi-night operation targeting resource and public safety crimes on the water along with the United States Coast Guard, the Lee County Sheriff's Office, and Cape Coral Police Department. The joint operation was successful and resulted in two felony arrests.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

LEE COUNTY

Officer Hazelwood taught his first hunter safety class at Bass Pro Shops in Fort Myers. Officer Hazelwood explained the legal aspects of the course and answered questions from the class participants. Officer Hazelwood is an avid outdoorsman and long-time hunter. He thoroughly enjoyed sharing his knowledge and experience with newcomers to the sport.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

Investigator Coffin responded to an early morning call of a crocodile roaming a neighborhood in Hallandale Beach. Investigator Coffin and the Hollywood Police Department located the 8'4" crocodile in the yard of a residence. A trapper was called to the scene and the crocodile was captured and relocated. This crocodile had been previously tagged and was the same crocodile which was found on Hollywood Beach back in November.

GLADES COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck was on land-based water patrol at the Harney Pond Canal boat ramp in Lakeport and observed a vessel with fishing equipment in plain view approaching the same ramp. The officer approached the vessel and two occupants and asked how many fish they had caught. The owner of the vessel stated that they had caught their limit of 50 black crappie. After receiving consent to inspect the fish located in a cooler on deck, 52 black crappie were counted. The passenger of the vessel took responsibility and received a citation for the violation. The fish were photographed and returned to the water.

Officer Brodbeck was on land-based water patrol late at night at Harney Pond Canal boat ramp in Lakeport. A vessel approached the ramp with two occupants and fishing equipment in plain view. The vessel owner stated that they had caught their two-person limit of 50 black crappie and consented to an inspection of a cooler located on the deck of the vessel. After inspecting the cooler, a total of 54 black crappie were counted. A second count, with both occupants counting, again resulted in 54 black crappie. The vessel passenger took responsibility for the violation and was issued a citation for violating the daily bag limit of black crappie. The fish were photographed and returned to the water.

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Brevik was conducting patrol near Stuart and observed an individual fishing underneath the Roosevelt Bridge. While approaching, he witnessed the man look at him and walk towards a bucket. The subject reached in the bucket, took out one black drum, and walked towards the water. The subject looked back again and held the fish over the water. Officer Brevik identified himself as FWC state police and told the subject not to drop the fish. With fish in hand over the water, the subject slowly took the fish away from the water. The subject stated he knew the black drum was undersized when he caught it and decided to keep it. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officer Brevik was conducting patrol near Jensen Beach when he responded to a call at the Jensen Beach Causeway of a male and female fishing at the causeway and keeping multiple undersized black drum. A resource inspection revealed three undersized black drum. The male subject stated that all the fish were his. The subject was cited accordingly.

OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck was on land-based water patrol at Scott Driver boat ramp on the Kissimmee River and saw a vessel approach the dock with fishing equipment in plain view and initiated a boating safety and resource inspection. When asked if they had caught any black crappie, the owner of the vessel stated that they had and pointed to a cooler. When asked if he knew the size limit for black crappie, the subject stated 10 inches and also pointed out a ruler located on the vessel. Two black crappie were located which measured well under the required 10 inches. The subject was issued a citation for the violation and the fish were returned to the water after being photographed.

Officer Brodbeck was on land-based water patrol at Scott Driver boat ramp on the Kissimmee River conducting boating safety and resource inspections. A vessel with a single occupant approached the dock with fishing equipment in plain view and Officer Brodbeck initiated a resource inspection. When asked, the subject stated that he had caught his daily limit of 25 black crappie. Upon inspection, 27 crappie were located in a cooler on the deck of the vessel. The subject had received a warning the previous week from Officer Brodbeck for the same violation. A citation was issued for over the daily bag limit of black crappie. The fish were photographed and returned to the water.

Officer Brodbeck was on land-based water patrol late at night conducting surveillance at Scott Driver boat ramp on the Kissimmee River. A vessel approached the dock with a sole occupant and fishing equipment in plain view. A resource inspection of the subject's cooler revealed 2 black crappie which were well below the 10-inch size limit for Lake Okeechobee. The subject was issued a citation for the violation, and the fish were photographed and returned to the water.

Officer Brodbeck was on vessel patrol late at night near Scott Driver boat ramp along the Kissimmee River. While conducting surveillance, the officer observed a vessel with two occupants approaching the dock with fishing equipment consistent with fishing for black crappie in plain view. A resource inspection revealed 6 undersized black crappie. The passenger of the vessel took responsibility for the violation and was issued a citation. The fish were photographed and returned to the water.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Defeo and Trawinski were on patrol on the intra-coastal waterway when they observed a vessel on plane in a slow speed manatee zone. The vessel ran aground and came to an abrupt stop. The officers conducted a vessel stop and determined the operator was operating the vessel while impaired. The subject was placed under arrest for BUI.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Hankinson and Officer Pecko patrolled federal waters off St. Lucie Inlet enforcing federal and state fishing laws. The officers conducted numerous vessel stops and inspections. Violations found were handled accordingly.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Hankinson, Moss, and Spradling conducted federal fisheries patrol with Federal NOAA Agent Nicotri. Federal fishery inspections were focused near 12-24 miles offshore of Palm Beach and Martin County. Numerous vessels traversing from the Bahamas were checked for compliance. Violations were handled appropriately.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

HENDRY COUNTY

Officers Warensford and Brodbeck conducted a hunter safety education presentation for approximately 10 students. The officers educated the students on the laws of hunting, introduced them to wildlife management areas, and encouraged proper hunting ethics. The course gave students the opportunity to meet some of the local FWC officers and to ask questions about hunting laws, regulations and ethics.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Lieutenant Russo and a Jupiter Police Officer assisted an older woman who was crying in her parked car on the side of Indiantown Road in Jupiter. The handicapped woman's electric scooter had fallen off the rear of her car and was in pieces on the side of the road. Officer Russo and the Jupiter Officer repaired the scooter and placed it back on the woman's car.

RESCUES

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Several Palm Beach County officers including Officers Spradling, Godward, Defeo, Trawinski, and Merizio, responded to a capsized vessel 5 miles offshore of Lake Worth. It was reported that the vessel had capsized and left 5 people stranded in the water. The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit as well as the USCG also responded. The 5 subjects were located and the vessel was towed by a commercial salvage company.

Officers Defeo and Merizio, along with Investigator Toby and Lieutenant Phillip responded to a traffic crash deep in the Corbett Wildlife Management Area. The driver had crashed into a tree and was unconscious for several minutes. EMS responded and transported the driver to the hospital.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

An officer conducting surveillance on his patrol vessel noticed two subjects pulling crab traps and placing them inside their vessel. He observed them relocating the traps after removing the catch. The officer contacted the vessel and identified that the traps did not belong to either of the subjects who removed the harvest. After an investigation and thorough inspection, the violators were charged with molesting blue crab traps and narcotics possession.

An officer observed a subject throwing a cast-net in a no-entry zone of Virginia Key. The subject was inspected and cited accordingly.

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Janzen was on land patrol bayside of Indian Key bridge when he observed two individuals fishing from the rocks. The two individuals made eye contact with Officer Janzen and immediately stopped fishing. One individual grabbed a stringer of fish and tossed it on the water away from where he was standing. Officer Janzen recovered the stringer with 8 undersized (Mangrove) Grey Snapper. The two men were charged with possession of undersized mangrove snapper. The individual that threw the stringer was also charged with interference or obstruction of an FWC Officer, and was taken to the Plantation Key Jail.

Officers Richards, Foell and Sapp onboard the FWC offshore Safe Boat patrolled Gulf of Mexico federal waters from Key West to the Dry Tortugas. The officers conducted a fisheries inspection on commercial shrimp vessel out of Biloxi, Mississippi. A resource inspection on multiple freezers inside the cabin of vessel revealed a variety of unregulated saltwater species. Inside the in-deck freezer hold, a brown grocery bag was discovered in between the actual wall of the freezer hold and a false wood-plank wall. The bag contained 18 wrung spiny lobster tails, 14 of which were undersized. An inspection of the turtle excluding devices (TEDs) onboard revealed two violations of improper bar spacing. The case was forwarded to NOAA for federal charges.

Officers Garrison, Powell, Carroll, Canamero (SW) and Lieutenant Parisoe (SW) responded to an assist call from Monroe County Sheriff's Office about a threat at Marathon High School. Lieutenant Cox assisted MCSO personnel as well. The search warrant was served and arrest made. FWC personnel stayed on scene until the last of the attendees had safely exited the area.

Officers Piekenbrock, Mobley, Rubenstein, and Wagner conducted offshore patrol in the Dry Tortugas Ecological Reserves and observed a vessel just outside the no fishing boundaries actively fishing. A resource inspection revealed two out of season red snapper, one out of season red grouper, six undersized yellowtail snapper, and a legal

mutton snapper. Citations were issued for the violations. Officers also conducted a vessel stop on a large commercial shrimp trawler. Officers cited the captain after the resource inspection that revealed eight out of season hogfish.

COLLIER COUNTY

Lieutenants Sushil and Bulger received a complaint of a subject parked illegally in Fakahatchee Preserve State Park. When they arrived on scene they recognized the subject's vehicle from previous encounters. The lieutenants believed the subject was fishing nearby but were unable to locate him. A short time later the subject and another man returned to the vehicle. The lieutenants performed a resource check on the subjects and determined that the subjects had failed to pay the park day use fee, had driven off the roadway to conceal their vehicle, and one subject did not have a valid freshwater fishing license. The subjects were cited accordingly

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Several FWC Miami-Dade officers and dispatchers worked the Miami Boat Show. The FWC personnel made hundreds of public outreach contacts and distributed informative materials. They answered questions and assisted many individuals interested in learning how to become involved with FWC. The guest attendance was upwards of 100,000 people.

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Dube and Rubenstein, along with FWC staff, assisted with the Keys Public Iguana Technical Assistance Workshops that were held in both Key West and Key Largo.

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Reams was nominated as the Wildlife Officer of the Year to represent the state of Florida at the 42nd annual National Wild Turkey Federation Convention & Sport Show. Officer Reams along with officers from around the country were recognized for their work at the awards banquet.

Officer Curbelo and Lieutenant Bulger represented FWC at the Collier County Sheriff's Office "Kids Love Fishing" event in Naples. This yearly event held at the CCSO Youth Deputy's Camp Discovery gives local children the opportunity to learn about fishing. Over 400 local youth were in attendance.

RESCUES

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Plussa and Knutson responded to a law enforcement assistance call from a commercial towboat near Marco Island. A small 13' vessel was taking on water and was disabled in the surf along the beach. Wake from passing vessel traffic was inhibiting the towboat's pump out of the small vessel. Officers slowed passing vessels for over a half-hour until the vessel had been pumped out and escorted safely to shore by the towboat.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

MONROE COUNTY

Investigator Mattson was on unmarked water patrol when he observed a commercial dive vessel aground and trying to power off the flat. The boat had a trail of mud at least 500 yards behind the stern of the boat. The boat was destroying the habitat with customers on board. When Investigator Mattson questioned the captain as to the reasoning he was powering off the flat, he said that he didn't want to be stuck. He said that the boat recently relocated to the bayside and he was unfamiliar with the waters on the bayside. Investigator Mattson cited the captain for destroying state park resources. The customers provided witness statements that the captain almost ran them aground earlier when they were going out to the reef. Investigator Mattson will do a follow up with the Lignumvitae State Park biologist. Investigator Mattson also obtained a video of the incident from a local charter captain.

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Thurkettle and Tidwell along with Lieutenant Sushil conducted panther zone speed enforcement on US 41. Numerous vehicles were stopped for speeding in the zone, with the fastest vehicle traveling at 85 mph in the posted 45 mph zone. Multiple subjects were cited accordingly and one driver was arrested for driving without a valid driver's license and possession of narcotics.

Officers Knutson and Plussa conducted foot and vessel patrol on and around Keewaydin Island and Tigertail Beach. They focused on littering, alcohol, and reports of dogs being off-leash near critical wildlife areas for protected nesting birds, as well as general BUI and boating safety patrol. Officers interacted with 85 people, providing a combination of education, written warnings, and issued citations for offenders with multiple violations.