

# FWC

## Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report



**March 2, 2018 through March 8, 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 McHenry completed his investigation on a derelict vessel located in the Santa Rosa Sound. The owner of the vessel claimed he sold it, but did not have a bill of sale or proof of transferred title. Officer Allgood issued the subject a notice to appear citation for the derelict vessel. Citations were also issued for improper lighting and expired registration.

Officer Pettey issued a notice to appear citation to an individual for turkey hunting in a closed season in McDavid. The individual was discovered turkey hunting by a hunting club member who relayed the information. After an interview, the subject admitted to hunting turkey out of season. Charges were filed with the State Attorney's Office for attempting to take turkey out of season.

##### **FRANKLIN COUNTY**

Officers Richardson, Sauls, Kossey, Peterson, Hofheinz, Reserve Officer Martin, and Lieutenant Cook conducted a special detail in St. George Island State Park. Officer Richardson organized the detail to address the increased number of visitors to St. George Island for the Annual Chili Cookoff. The detail focused on areas in the state park where shorebirds are actively nesting. During the detail, four infractions, four written warnings, and six verbal warnings were issued for state park violations.

Officer Travis was targeting undersized oysters in the Eastpoint area and conducted a resource inspection at the Eastpoint Boat Ramp. The vessel had four people on board and nine bags of oysters. During the inspection, he checked the size tolerance of two bags. The first bag contained 61% undersized oysters and the second bag contained 63% undersized oysters. Two subjects were cited for possession of undersized oysters and the small oysters were returned to the Apalachicola Bay alive.

Officer Kossey was on patrol in the Tate's Hell Wildlife Management Area. He approached a truck on the Gully Branch Road and contacted several subjects that were looking for snakes and other reptiles. During his resource inspection, one of the subjects, a convicted felon, had a pistol in his truck's glovebox. The subject was arrested for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

## GADSDEN COUNTY

Officers Hildebrand and Johnson were on water patrol on the Little River and observed a man fishing with a rod and reel close to a boat ramp. A resource inspection revealed that the subject did not have a valid fishing license. As Officer Hildebrand talked with the subject, he smelled the odor of cannabis. Dispatch advised the officers that the subject had two active warrants out of Leon County and one out of Suwanee County. The subject was arrested and Officer Hildebrand asked the subject if he had any drugs on him and he replied that he had a "joint" in his tackle box. Officer Hildebrand checked the tackle box and located the cannabis. A physical arrest was made and appropriate citations were issued.

## OKALOOSA COUNTY

A boating accident investigation completed in 2017 by Investigator Molnar recently resulted in a guilty verdict resulting in a \$1,000 fine and one-year probation from the court. The investigation involved an operator and one other occupant running through a dock causing more than \$36,000 in damage including damage to the boat and the dock. Investigator Molnar subpoenaed the operator's medical blood which resulted in a BAC of .175. The operator was later arrested and charged with BUI causing property damage and injury to another as well as violation of navigational rules 5 (improper lookout) and 6 (safe speed).

Officer Corbin was on vessel patrol conducting boating safety and resource inspections in the Destin Harbor when he observed a 10-foot vessel operating with an expired boat registration and no registration displayed on the starboard side. The officer observed the small boat leaving an anchored sailboat in the harbor and heading toward land. Officer Corbin contacted Officer Pifer, who was on land patrol, and directed him to the location of where the small boat docked. Officer Pifer contacted the operator and conducted a boating safety inspection. The officer noticed discrepancies with the vessel's title. The vessel was registered as a 2016 10-foot homemade vessel and had a hull identification number (HIN) assigned to it that was different than the HIN number attached to the vessel. The vessel was identified as a 2001 10-foot Alumacraft. The

registration expired on 10/13/17. The officers confirmed that the operator had been the owner of the vessel for a year, but had failed to transfer the title to his name. The owner stated he had not received the vessel title from the previous owner/seller. The owner provided the name of the person he purchased the boat from which matched the current registered owner of the stopped vessel. The officers concluded the stop and advised the new owner they would research the discrepancies and would be in contact later. The research determined the previous owner/seller had falsely/fraudulently titled the vessel as a homemade boat. Warrants were obtained and filed against the previous owner/seller for three felonies: title fraud, filing a fraudulent certificate of title and false statement and one misdemeanor for failure to notify the Department of Highway Safety Motor Vehicle (DHSMV) for selling the vessel.

Officer Corbin was on land patrol conducting boating safety and resource inspections when he observed an individual actively working on a vessel docked behind a hotel in Fort Walton Beach. In conversation with the individual, the officer noticed the vessel displayed an expired registration. Officer Corbin determined from the bill of sale the individual was also the owner of the vessel since November 2016. The new owner failed to transfer the vessel's title into his name within 30 days from purchase. The owner was issued a notice to appear citation.

Officer Corbin was on land patrol conducting resource protection on Eglin Wildlife Management Area when he observed a group of individuals congregating around a campsite off Little Rocky Creek. The officer observed the subjects discarding what appeared to be beer cans on the ground and in the bushes. Officer Corbin determined the five individuals were underage and consuming alcoholic beverages. Further, the individuals failed to obtain the required Eglin Camping Permit. Five subjects were cited and issued a notice to appear citation for possessing/consuming alcoholic beverage.

## SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Hutchinson was patrolling in Blackwater State Forest when he observed a campsite where a man and woman were packing up. As he pulled up, the man threw items under a log. A quick look revealed drug paraphernalia. A closer look revealed numerous items of drug paraphernalia and several containers with cocaine in various forms. The subjects were also in possession of methamphetamine. The woman admitted to making crack cocaine in the campsite and smoking methamphetamine. Both subjects were charged with manufacturing crack cocaine, possession of methamphetamine, and possession of drug paraphernalia and booked in the Santa Rosa County Jail.

Lieutenant Hahr was patrolling in Blackwater State Forest when he observed a campsite where some of the people were drinking alcoholic beverages. As he approached them, the five subjects passed around a cannabis pipe and each of them smoked from it. Lieutenant Hahr identified himself and seized the pipe, a bag of cannabis, and numerous items of drug paraphernalia. All five subjects were charged

with possession of not more than 20 grams of cannabis and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Officers Ramos, Lugg, Wilkerson, Clark, Long, Cushing and Land participated in targeted enforcement of pompano regulations along Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Escambia County beaches. The officers checked more than 200 anglers in a two-week span resulting in 5 citations and 12 warnings for various violations.

Officer Ramos was patrolling the Santa Rosa Sound and observed a vessel operating in the Quietwater Beach area. A routine boating safety inspection was conducted and the operator could not produce two required safety items or the required registration. He stated he bought the boat two years ago but could not produce a bill of sale or any type of registration. Officer Ramos followed the vessel to a nearby boat ramp where the operator recovered the vessel from the water. The truck used to pull the boat did not have a registration tag on it nor the vessel trailer. After a thorough investigation, the operator was deemed to have purchased the out-of-state vessel in 2013 and failed to transfer the title. The truck he was driving had an expired registration of 2016. The owner was issued a criminal citation for failing to record an out of state vessel, a traffic citation for expired vehicle registration greater than 6 months, a boating citation for failing to carry required safety equipment, as well as multiple warnings for other violations.

Officer Ramos observed two men return from a fishing trip and followed them to a local boat ramp. The vessel was pushing a wake in an idle speed zone until they saw the officer approach. After a boating safety inspection, Officer Ramos asked if the men had caught any fish. The men showed him ten gray snapper and several unregulated fish in a cooler. Upon measuring the snapper, seven of the ten were undersized. The captain of the vessel admitted he should have measured the fish and took responsibility for the seven undersized fish. The fish were seized and the man was cited for the undersized fish and issued a warning for violating the idle speed zone.

## WAKULLA COUNTY

While on patrol in the St. Marks area, Officer Morales noticed a vessel approaching a dock. The vessel struck the dock hard and the two occupants appeared to be having a hard time mooring to it. Officer Morales approached the vessel and occupant to see if he could assist. After securing the vessel, Officer Morales conducted a boating safety and fisheries inspection. The inspection revealed multiple violations pertaining to vessel registration and possession of undersized hogfish. During the inspection, it was also determined that one of the occupants had an active arrest warrant. The subject was placed under arrest and the violations were cited.

## LEON COUNTY

Officers from Leon and Jefferson Counties provided law enforcement support for the reenactment of the 153th Anniversary of the Battle of Natural Bridge. The battle took

place in March of 1865 and preserved Tallahassee's status as the only Southern capital east of the Mississippi not conquered by Union forces during the Civil War. Lieutenant Field brought out the command bus and Duty Officers Strickland, Helton and Souders used it as their base of operations. The duty officers were in charge of ensuring that reenactors met eligibility requirements before they could participate in the reenactment. Lieutenant Olson, Investigator Bryant, and Officers Johnson, Wilcox, Pekerol, and Lieutenant Wass de Czege provided law enforcement support throughout the event. More than 1,300 visitors attended the reenactment without serious incident.

## **NORTH CENTRAL REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **DUVAL COUNTY**

Officers Christmas and McGregor were on routine land patrol when they came upon an vehicle under a bridge near Broward River with a female sitting in the driver's seat. There was an unknown male standing outside the vehicle. As the officers approached, the female started screaming for some unknown reason. Contact was made with both subjects and the female who was sitting in the driver's seat with the ignition running, stated she was screaming because she was just partying. As the female spoke to Officer Christmas signs of impairment were observed. The female stated she could not produce a driver's license because it was suspended. Officer Christmas read her Miranda Rights and requested she take field sobriety exercises. She agreed and did poorly. The female was arrested and booked into the Duval County Jail where she blew .187 and .178 on the breath test. She was cited for DUI, driving on a suspended driver's license and possession of an open container because she had an open bottle of whiskey next to her when she exited the driver's seat.

Environmental Investigator Terrones observed moderately heavy smoke coming from a Jacksonville wood yard and upon further examination realized that the company was burning tree debris in a 47' x 35' x 4' deep pit without anyone attending the fire or without any resources anywhere in sight with which to put the fire out as required by law. Due to the heavy winds and nearby woods and residences, the fire department was summoned to extinguish the fire. The first employee did not arrive at the location until 90 minutes later. The business owner later admitted that the debris being burnt was generated off-site and he was cited for burning prohibited materials and open burning that is not attended with adequate fire extinguishing equipment available at all times. The Florida Forestry Service and Jacksonville Sheriff's Office also responded and cited the business owner with a notice of violation and a city burning ordinance violation. Due to the number of previous complaints against this business, the fire department Fire and Safety Inspector will conduct a follow up inspection as well.

#### **CLAY COUNTY**

Lt. Haney was on patrol in a state forest shortly after midnight when he saw a truck enter the forest, spin in the road, and accelerate at a high rate of speed. He followed the truck, saw it hit an embankment and almost wreck. He stopped the truck and observed signs of impairment from the operator. After an investigation, the operator was arrested for DUI. He was transported to jail and two hours after the stop, he provided a breath sample, measuring .125 g/210L of breath. He was charged with DUI, reckless driving, entering a state forest after hours, and possession of alcohol in the forest.

## DIXIE COUNTY

FWC officers, including aviation, worked a detail in Dixie County focusing on the illegal harvest of oysters. FWC officers in the air observed several vessels harvesting oysters in closed waters. Aviation directed officers on the water to where the harvesters were located. Officers made contact and subsequently issued several misdemeanor citations, made two physical arrests, and returned 18 bushels of illegally harvested oysters back to the water.

Lieutenant James Futch was on patrol when he observed a vessel with a subject actively gigging fish. As the vessel came to shore, Lieutenant Futch approached and made contact. During a resource inspection, he discovered 10 undersized flounder in the live well. The subject was cited for the violation.

Officer Austin Sheffield was on patrol late at night in the Jena WMA when he observed a suspicious vehicle. He observed a subject getting in and out of the vehicle several times, shining a light. The officer made contact and noticed the subject was holding drug paraphernalia in his hand. In plain view, he observed several beer cans in the passenger seat of the vehicle. The subject displayed several signs of impairment during the encounter and Officer Sheffield requested he conduct field sobriety tasks. The subject was arrested for driving under the influence, driving on a suspended license, possession of drug paraphernalia, and possession of cannabis.

## GILCHRIST COUNTY

FWC officers worked a detail at the recently opened Gilchrist Blue Springs State Park in Gilchrist County. Officers focused on complaints received about open containers of alcohol and other park rule violations. The detail was successful in educating the public about state park rules and other public safety issues.

## CITRUS/HERNANDO COUNTY

During a recent patrol, the FWC Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) 2005 Fin Cat stopped numerous vessels in federal waters offshore of Citrus and Hernando Counties. One vessel inspection resulted in Officer Boyer locating two undersized hog fish. On another vessel inspection, Officer Boyer found the subjects to be in possession of a severely undersized gag grouper which is also currently closed for possession. Both subjects were issued citations for the violations. A third vessel inspection by Officer Boyer found

a subject in possession of two gray triggerfish during closed season. A federal case package will be forwarded to NOAA for prosecution of the possession of gray triggerfish during closed season.

## **NORTHEAST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **PUTNAM COUNTY**

Lieutenant Dickson and Officers Jones and Bernard responded to a reported vessel crash under the Memorial Bridge. Upon arrival and investigation, it was found that it was not a vessel crash, but a stolen vessel incident. A runaway juvenile untied a vessel at the City Dock and was floating down river. The juvenile was turned over to his mother and no charges were filed for the theft.

Officer Jones was conducting fisheries inspections at Rodman Dam when he noticed a homemade marijuana pipe lying next to a tackle box. The owner of the tackle box was also in possession of under 20 grams of cannabis. Charges were filed for possession of cannabis under 20 grams and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Officer Jones was on patrol at Rodman Dam when he observed two subjects throwing a cast net from the side of the spillway. He continued surveillance of the subjects until he observed them put fish into a cooler. Upon contacting the subjects, it was found that they had unlawfully taken black crappie with the cast net and had left their bycatch of other fish to die on the concrete. The subjects were charged with taking crappie by illegal method and willful/wanton waste of freshwater fish.

Officer Guirate was on patrol at Rodman Dam when he contacted a subject throwing a cast net near the spillway. An inspection revealed that the subject had unlawfully taken several black crappie with the cast net and had given other game fish away that were also caught in the net. The subject was charged with taking crappie by illegal method.

#### **VOLUSIA COUNTY**

Officer West was in his marked FWC patrol truck and traveling home when he observed the vehicle in front of him swerving several times and failing to maintain a lane. After stopping the vehicle, the driver showed signs of impairment. Following an investigation, she was arrested and booked into the Volusia County Jail for DUI. She was also charged with possessing prescribed narcotics without a prescription.

### **SEARCH AND RESCUE**

#### **PUTNAM COUNTY**

Lieutenant Dickson and Officer Mason responded to a reported vessel crash on the Ocklawaha River. The subject shot a gun several times and blew his air horn in an attempt to get someone's attention. Lieutenant Dickson and Marion County Fire Rescue boarded a civilian's vessel and responded to the scene. Upon arrival it was found that the subjects were fine and the boat was just disabled. The subjects and vessel were towed to a nearby ramp by the civilian.

## **SOUTHWEST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **HERNANDO COUNTY**

Officer Canamero responded to a call regarding a subject attempting to take gopher tortoises. Two sites were located where the subject had placed wooden pallets over the burrow to contain the tortoises and buckets inside the burrow. The subject was identified and citations were issued accordingly.

Officers Spradlin and Sehl were conducting surveillance at Perry Oldenberg Wildlife and Environmental Area (WEA) due to recent vandalism and other criminal activity. They located two subjects in the WEA after hours and in possession of alcohol by person under 21. The subjects were cited accordingly.

Officer Canamero was on patrol in Croom Wildlife Management Area (WMA). A subject was located parked on a closed road. Upon making contact, the subject was found in possession of crack cocaine and marijuana. The subject was arrested and taken to the Hernando County jail where he was charged accordingly.

#### **HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY**

Officer Gonzales was on land patrol around US 41 near the Manatee County line. While on patrol he noticed a car parked in a peculiar area near a section of Southwest Florida Water Management District property closed to foot traffic. As Officer Gonzales parked his patrol vehicle he could see several individuals running away from him back into the woods. The two subjects were apprehended in the woods after a short foot chase. The subjects had been fishing on the water management property and had walked past several "no trespassing" signs to gain entry. The subjects were cited for numerous criminal violations pertaining to trespassing and resisting without violence. They were transported to the Hillsborough County jail and will have to appear in court for their violations.

#### **PASCO COUNTY**

Officer Pulaski and Lieutenant Parisoe were at Sims Park Boat Ramp when they saw a vessel pull alongside the dock. Officer Pulaski began a conversation with the operator to

conduct an inspection. During the conversation, multiple signs of impairment were observed. After a brief investigation, Officer Pulaski arrested the individual for boating under the influence. Officer Pulaski then transported the operator to the Pasco County jail where he was booked for the violation.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

While on land patrol in South Pinellas County, Officer Bibeau contacted an individual that was actively fishing from the shoreline to conduct a fisheries inspection. After the inspection, a small snook was located inside a bait bucket. Officer Bibeau measured the snook and found that it was only 18 inches. The individual was written a misdemeanor citation for possession of an undersized snook and a warning for not obtaining a snook permit.

While on water patrol offshore of St. Pete Beach, Officer Bibler stopped a vessel that he observed had spear fishermen in the water. Officer Bibler told the two men that he was going to do a resource inspection and asked if they had any fish onboard. One subject stated that they had hogfish and sheepshead and showed Officer Bibler a cooler with legal hogfish and sheepshead inside. After inspecting the first cooler, Officer Bibler noticed a second cooler in the back of the vessel and asked what was in it, and the subject simply stated, "more fish." Officer Bibler inspected the cooler and found two out of season gag grouper. The subject was cited for possession of gag grouper during a closed season.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### PASCO COUNTY

Officer Bergwerff and Lieutenant Parisoe responded to a complaint in the High Bluffs area of the Withlacoochee State Forest. According to the information, several individuals were riding ATVs around the area. During the investigation the officers noticed large numbers of individuals at a known hang-out. In all, the officers spoke with several individuals and issued citations and warnings for ATVs in undesignated area, possession of alcohol in prohibited area, open fire in prohibited area, and remaining in day-use area after hours.

## RESCUES

### DESOTO COUNTY

Officer Kobs responded to a boating accident on the Lower Peace River. Three persons were riding on an airboat when the airboat came to a sudden stop. One of the passengers came out of her seat and struck the front deck of the boat. The passenger was taken to the Nocatee Boat Ramp by a good Samaritan and was taken to a local hospital. Officer Kobs is investigating the boating accident.

## LEE COUNTY

Officer Price responded to a lost hiker in the Estero Bay Buffer Preserve. The hiker called and stated he was walking his dog and got turned around after dark. Officer Price called him on his phone, told him to stay where he was, and gathered information about his location. After a short while, Officer Price was able to locate the hiker and his dog approximately ½ mile from a trail in a large salt flat surrounded by mangroves. Officer Price drove the hiker and his dog back to the trail where he was given a ride to the parking lot in Lieutenant Barrett's patrol truck. Thankfully, the hiker and the dog had no medical issues and both were glad to be safe and back at their vehicle.

## **SOUTH REGION A**

### CASES

#### BROWARD COUNTY

Officer Ryan discovered an abandoned boat submerged at a boat ramp along Alligator Alley. Pursuant to an investigation, he determined the owner of the boat. Upon contact with the owner it was learned that he knowingly dumped the 23-foot vessel as garbage. Officer Ryan will be filing several charges against the owner with the Broward State Attorney's Office.

Officer Banks was on patrol in western Broward near the border with Palm Beach County. She conducted a fresh water fisheries inspection on a large group of individuals who were fishing. With the assistance of Officer Ryan, it was found that one subject had several outstanding warrants including grand theft out of Broward County. Officer Banks placed the individual under arrest and delivered him to the Broward County jail.

#### GLADES COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck was on vessel patrol when he observed three individuals fishing from the SR 78 Bridge over the Sportsman's Canal. The officer beached his vessel a distance away and approached the subjects on foot to conduct a resource inspection. Officer Brodbeck recognized one subject as having been previously warned for possession of undersized black crappie. After receiving consent to inspect his cooler, the officer located three black crappie measuring less than the required 10 inches for Lake Okeechobee waters, as well as a measuring device next to the cooler. The subject was issued a citation for the violation. The fish were photographed and returned to the water.

#### MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Willems was on patrol in Hungryland WMA where he stopped and checked an individual for his camping permit. As he approached, the individual jumped up out of his

chair and stated that he had just let his dog off his leash to use the bathroom. As they were talking, the dog came charging out of the woods and was grabbed by the individual before it could get to Officer Willems. The dog was acting very aggressively and had to be secured in the individual's vehicle. This same individual had been warned two weeks prior for having the same dog off leash. The individual was issued a criminal citation for not having his dog leashed and under control.

Officer Carroll stopped a commercial fishing vessel that was chartering three subjects which was confirmed by asking one of the occupants on board the vessel. A money transaction was also observed at the filet table. During a resource inspection, the captain lied and stated he was not chartering the subjects and that he knew them personally. Officer Brevik arrived on scene as backup. A records check revealed the subject to be a convicted felon. While the subject was retrieving paperwork from his vehicle, live ammunition was observed in plain view inside the vehicle. The subject was placed under arrest for being a felon in possession of ammunition and was booked into the Martin County jail. Additionally, the subject was cited for not having an FWC charter license, not having a sufficient number of lifejackets on board the vessel, and for having an expired registration.

Officers Rogers, Pecko, Morrow, McLeod, Kirkland, Carroll, and Brevik conducted a vessel stop in which the vessel operator was found to be impaired. The vessel, which was stopped for being unregistered and having no navigation lights, was operated by a subject who exhibited signs of impairment through slurred speech and other visual signs of impairment. Upon completion of field sobriety tasks, Officer Rogers placed the subject under arrest. The subject was booked into the Martin County Jail for Boating Under the Influence (BUI) and was issued a citation for no navigation lights.

## OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Officer Davis received a tip from a local landowner that subjects had launched a vessel from the roadway and were heading towards his property. Officer Davis and Investigator Douglas responded to the property and located the subjects which were still in the vessel in the canal. After conducting surveillance on the subjects, it was found that they were setting trot lines in the canal. Suspecting the individuals were poaching turtles, Officer Davis and Investigator Douglas left the area with plans of returning later in the day to observe them pick the lines. Several hours later, Officer Davis and Officer Allen returned to the area and waited for the subjects to return. After hours of surveillance the subjects returned to pick up the lines. With the help of Investigators Douglas, Harris and Patterson the subjects were kept under surveillance while they pulled the trot lines. While the subjects were still pulling the lines, another vehicle pulled up to the subject's vehicle and appeared to wait for their return. As they pulled the vessel out of the canal, Officers Davis and Allen conducted a resource inspection. Citations were issued for over the bag limit of softshell turtles (29), 4 unmarked trot lines and transporting turtles without a permit.

Investigators Douglas and Patterson were on land patrol when they came upon a minor traffic crash. Upon arriving, they observed a male subject fleeing the accident scene on foot. The Investigators located the subject hiding in tall grass and apprehended him without incident. It was learned that the subject had an outstanding warrant for his arrest. The subject and traffic crash was turned over to the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office for further investigation.

#### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Kirkland responded to a call initiated by the Corbett check station operator about individuals who failed to pay the day use fee at the South Check Station. She located the individuals by the vehicle description and wrote three citations. One for no fishing license (resident), no fishing license (non-resident) and possession of alcohol outside of camp.

#### RESCUES

#### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Stone responded to a call involving two people that were lost in the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area. The husband and wife were found off Trail 7 (after a phone call from Officer Stone to the couple) and escorted back to the main grade. They were issued a written warning for illegal "off trail" operation and educated on the management area regulations.

Lt. Phillip and Officers Norbrothen, Rogers, and Moss responded to a 911 call regarding a family lost in the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area. The subjects were found by a passerby and given a ride to the check station.

#### DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

#### MARTIN COUNTY

Officers Morrow, Rogers, Kirkland, Pecko, and McLeod, along with Lt. Russo and Captain Schaeffer conducted a special operation which focused on enforcement of marine sanitation devices (MSD) and illegal moorings. Numerous violations were located and addressed, including a subject who was found to have an unsecured Y valve which resulted in flushed vessel waste flowing. All violations were cited or warned accordingly.

#### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Defeo, Trawinski, Carroll and Brevik conducted a Manatee Zone enforcement saturation detail over the weekend. The officers documented a total of 37 citations and warnings during Saturday and Sunday.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### GLADES COUNTY

Officers Dial, Worrell and Nasworth participated in the Moore Haven kids fishing tournament. There were well over 100 kids present for the fishing tournament. The officers assisted in handing out cane poles, dehooking fish, answering questions about freshwater fishing and handing out medals to the kids. Officers Dial, Worrell and Nasworth represented FWC in a professional manner and had a successful public outreach event.

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Gouveia assisted the Division of Wildlife with a presentation to a local community about living with coyotes. The presentation consisted of a PowerPoint, various hazing tools and Q&A time.

Officers Mann and Langley attended the Nature Scape outreach event at MacArthur Beach State Park. The officers provided general security as well as answered questions and provided information to park guests attending the event.

Officers Matthews, Moore and LeBlanc assisted with the Outdoor Adventure at John Prince Park. The FWC provided fishing gear and bait as well as an archery booth to test the children's skills with a bow and arrow. Members from our Freshwater Fisheries Section were present to help the kids with baiting hooks and casting instructions. A fun time was had by everyone who attended.

### ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Officer Irwin participated in an outreach event held in Fort Pierce. The Blessing of the Fleet is a yearly event that draws many vessel owners to the area. Also at the event were two sea planes that landed in the inlet. Officer Irwin and the sheriff's office marine unit escorted both planes safely through vessel traffic to the staging area. The event continued at the base of the Fort Pierce South Bridge where different vendors provided food and various activities for families.

Officer Miano and Payne participated in the Become an Outdoor Woman program and assisted instructors. They were stationed at the gun range and assisted with rifle shooting, pistol shooting and muzzleloader guns. Officer Payne also gave a K-9 demo and drove the buggy for attendees.

## **SOUTH REGION B**

### CASES

## MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

An officer was on water patrol near Haulover Inlet when he observed a vessel returning from offshore. It had three people on board and a diving hookah rig was visible. The officer stopped the vessel to conduct safety equipment and fishery inspections. When a cooler was opened, the officer discovered seven legal lobsters (one speared), undersized red grouper (closed season), three speared undersized mutton snapper, and one speared undersized hogfish (closed season). The officer issued appropriate citations/charges to all three subjects.

An officer and an investigator were on patrol in an area known for bunting trapping in Homestead. They observed a pickup truck parked adjacent to a fence line with what appeared to be bird cages in the back bed. Upon contacting the driver, they confirmed two trapping cages in the back of his pickup, containing two painted buntings. At his residence, the subject was in possession of one blue grosbeak, one painted bunting and a white crowned sparrow, all in separate trapping cages at his residence. He admitted all five birds and five trapping cages were his. He was cited for the violations of possessing several migratory birds and the traps were seized.

## MONROE COUNTY

Officer Alvarez arrested a subject on an in county FWC warrant while he was fishing on Long Key Bridge. Officer Alvarez also charged the subject with a felony for possession of a synthetic form of cannabis. Investigator Hein assisted in the arrest. The subject was also issued two warnings for possession of marine life and transported to the Monroe County Jail.

Officer Petru responded to a call about a box truck that was reportedly illegally dumping into the water at Indian Key Fill State Park. Officer Petru arrived on land and Officer Thompson by water. Officers asked to look inside the tanks and found no saltwater product inside. Officers found that he had a warrant out of Miami-Dade county for battery. The operator was arrested and transported to Plantation Key Jail.

## COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Plussa was conducting a follow-up investigation into a derelict vessel in a remote cove near Goodland Bay. After months of abandonment, he found vessel occupied by the owner. An investigation revealed multiple crimes relating to transfer of registration and title, multiple public health violations and that vessel was still in derelict condition. During the inspection, Officer Plussa and the owner almost fell through the deck as they walked around the vessel. In addition to receiving citations for no life jacket, no marine toilet, and an expired registration from 2011, the owner was arrested for multiple misdemeanors and booked into the Collier County Jail.

Officer Yaxley was conducting land-based water patrol and observed a subject selling grouper, shrimp, and other fish at a farmer's market near Marco Island. An inspection

revealed the subject failed to have the required commercial licenses for retail sale of saltwater products. Officer Plussa, Lieutenant Mahoney, and Lieutenant Shea arrived to assist with the investigation and processing evidence. The violator was charged and cited accordingly.

Officers Kleis and Arbogast responded to a Marine Emergency Response Team call (MERT) regarding a missing person who had fallen off a PWC after it ran aground. It was dark and the caller (the operator of the PWC) stated that he had no idea where the passenger was located. Lieutenant Sushil and Investigator White also responded to the call. Upon arriving on scene, Officers Kleis and Arbogast contacted the 911 caller and his PWC. The operator was belligerent, yelling at the officers and Fire Rescue personnel on scene, and showing multiple other signs of impairment. The officers gathered as much information as they could with the operator acting in an aggressive manner. The missing passenger had made their way to shore and was eventually found to be safe with minor injuries. The officers gathered witness statements, and began a BUI investigation. Officer Kleis administered the seated field sobriety exercises on the operator of the PWC. The operator was subsequently arrested for BUI and transported to the Collier County Jail where he refused a breath test.

Investigator White and Officer Kleis were conducting water patrol when they observed the operator and a passenger of a vessel discard litter into the water. The officers stopped the vessel to address the violation and noticed multiple empty alcoholic beverage containers throughout the vessel. The operator exhibited bloodshot eyes and multiple other signs of impairment. After addressing the littering violations and conducting a boating safety inspection, the operator consented to participating in field sobriety exercises. Investigator White administered the exercises, and the operator performed poorly. The operator was arrested for BUI and booked into the Collier County Jail where he provided a breath sample of over twice the legal limit.

Officer Kleis and Investigator White were conducting nighttime water patrol when they observed a vessel operating without navigation lights. The officers stopped the vessel to address the violation. Upon telling the operator the reason for the stop, he turned on his lights. There were multiple empty alcohol beverage containers on the vessel. The operator exhibited multiple signs of impairment including slurred speech and a lack of balance. After addressing the light violation and conducting a boating safety inspection, the operator agreed to participate in field sobriety exercises. Officer Kleis administered the seated field sobriety exercises and subsequently arrested the operator for Boating Under the Influence. The operator was booked into the Collier County Jail and refused to provide a breath sample. The operator was also cited for other violations.

While preparing for the spring turkey season, Officers Polly and Araujo found a ground blind on private property less than 10 yards from turkey bait. The officers continued to check on the property to ensure that feed was still present right up until opening day. Officer Araujo and Investigator McColgin hid on the property opening morning and witnessed subjects actively calling for turkey. At around 7:30 in the morning they heard a shot and soon after encountered the subject to address the violation of hunting turkey

over bait. The subject killed two bearded gobblers while hunting well within 100 yards of a game feeding station with feed present. Officer Araujo issued the subject a notice to appear for the violation and educated the subject and his son, who later thanked him for his professionalism.

While looking for bait prior to the start of spring turkey season, Officer Polly came upon a trail that led from private land into the Picayune Strand WMA. Officer Polly followed the trail and found a permanent tree stand built into the trees with a hunting blind underneath. Also at the site was a feeder cable tied to the trees and an active game camera. Officer Polly returned to the site two days before season opened and observed cracked corn within 10 yards of the blind. Officer Reams and Officer Polly worked the area opening weekend but no hunters came. On the third morning, Officer Polly observed two subjects enter the area. After listening to the subjects actively call turkeys for approximately an hour Officer Polly contacted the subjects to address the violations. During questioning one of the subjects admitted to building the stand and placing the bait in the WMA. Both subjects were issued notices to appear for attempting to take wildlife over bait in a WMA, hunting turkeys within 100 yards of feed, and each received a citation for failing to possess a valid quota permit. Officers issued misdemeanors and infractions accordingly reference their violations.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### MONROE COUNTY

The SRB Dive Team conducted a Targeted Enforcement Action Plan around Key West Harbor. While uniformed officers conducted boating safety inspections, dive members inspected the ground tackle the vessels were using. Most of the violations were found on the south end of Fleming Key near the entrance to Key West Harbor. Various types of anchor systems were observed and documented with the prevailing circumstance that the anchor systems were permanently affixed to the bottom and that these systems could not be retrieved by human power or by mechanical means. Numerous vessel inspections were conducted, many users were checked, multiple boating citations/written warnings were given and a significant amount of education/public outreach contacts were made.

FWC SRB Dive Team worked in conjunction with Monroe County Sheriff's Office's dive team to target illegal moorings within anchorages throughout the Florida Keys. The team members were able to dive down and examine the moorings to determine whether or not they are in compliance with Florida Statutes. Since the statute changed in July of 2017, the team members used the opportunity to not only enforce violations, but to educate the public on the statute changes and advise the residents of the anchorages on how to come into compliance. During the enforcement action, dive team members also examined sunken derelict vessels, conducted boating safety and removed artificial habitats (known to illegally harvest spiny lobsters), and removed other sorts of debris and trash from the basin bottoms.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### MONROE COUNTY

Officer Sapp represented the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission during Sugarloaf School's Safety Day. Officer Sapp spoke to an estimated 600 students about boating safety. Officer Sapp spoke to the students about lifejackets, fire extinguishers, flares, float plans, and other safety related topics. Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Fire Rescue, Coast Guard, Florida Highway Patrol, Border Patrol, and the Trauma Star helicopter were present for the event.