

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



Patrol, Protect, Preserve

November 16, 2018 through November 29, 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.

NORTHWEST REGION

CASES

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Allgood was patrolling Ft. Pickens conducting resource inspections when he saw two subjects carrying a cooler off the beach towards their vehicle. He contacted the subjects and saw a large red drum located in the cooler with the head and tail cut off. The fish appeared to be grossly oversized and was not landed in whole condition. Officer Allgood issued the subject a resource citation for failure to land a red drum in whole condition.

Officers participated in a targeted enforcement action organized by Officer Allgood working illegal bait sites within Escambia Wildlife Management Area. Officers Allgood and Hutchison with K-9 Zara located two locations where bait was placed within the management area. Both baited areas were located on the ground near tree stands. After monitoring the baited sites, Officers Allgood and Pettey located a subject hunting over one of the baited sites. The subject admitted to placing bait in the management area to attract hogs. Later that day, Officer Allgood located two subjects hunting at the second bait site. One of the subjects admitted to placing bait on the management area. Resource citations were issued to both parties for placing bait on a management area to attract deer or hogs. Several warnings were issued to both subjects as well.

Officer Clark was on a social media website that was known for local fishing posts. He saw a post that had an individual holding up an undersized bull shark. Officer Clark spoke with the individual and the subject stated that he did catch the shark but gave it

away. Officer Clark educated the suspect on the laws of undersized sharks and the definition of harvest. Charges were filed for harvesting a shark with a fork length of less than 54 inches.

Lieutenant Lambert was working duck hunting from a concealed location at Salter's Lake within the Escambia River. He saw a subject arrive at the boat ramp and launch a small boat at sunset. The subject shot at ducks until 25 minutes after sunset. Legal hunting hours for duck hunting ends at sunset. Appropriate citations were issued for the violation.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Officers Sauls and McLeod were on patrol in when they received a complaint about subjects taking undersized spotted sea trout on the Eastpoint Fishing Pier. They arrived at the pier and contacted two subjects and conducted a resource inspection. The inspection revealed the subjects were in possession of undersized and over the bag limit of trout. Both subjects were cited, and 20 undersized trout were seized.

Officer Travis was on patrol when he received a complaint about subjects taking undersized spotted sea trout from the Eastpoint Fishing Pier. He arrived on scene and watched multiple subjects actively fishing. He identified one group that was transporting undersized trout to their vehicle. Officer Travis contacted the subjects and conducted a resource inspection. The subjects were in possession of undersized trout. Officer Travis cited the subjects and seized the undersized fish.

GULF COUNTY

Officers Gerber and McMillion were on patrol when they saw an individual displaying a light from the driver's side window of a vehicle. They followed the vehicle for several miles as the driver continued to display the light. They conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle and during their inspection they found a 30-30 rifle and several rounds nearby. They also found an open container of alcohol inside the vehicle. The subject was cited for the open container and issued a notice to appear citation for attempting to take deer with the use of gun and light.

Officer Webb responded to a request for assistance from the Gulf County Sheriff's Office in a gated subdivision, where witnesses described hearing four rifle shots. Two male subjects in a truck with a bloody bed and tailgate were located and detained. Evidence included three rifles (an AR-15 with high capacity magazines and two .22 rifles), one short barreled 12-gauge shotgun, two young antlerless deer, and a bag of ammunition. Blood samples were collected. In consultation with the State Attorney, both subjects were cited for possession of doe/antlerless deer during open season, use of rimfire cartridge firearm for taking deer, and possession of centerfire semi auto rifle with magazine capacity greater than five rounds while taking deer.

HOLMES COUNTY

After receiving a complaint of a doe and spotted fawn carcass being dumped on private property, Officers Yates, Homan, Gore, and Greene collaborated to identify suspects and investigate. Two subjects were cited for taking a spotted fawn and taking deer by illegal method and use of firearm during archery season.

Officer Yates was on patrol before daylight when he saw a vehicle stopped on Highway 90. The headlights were shining the wood line and a subject was walking around looking in the ditch. Upon further investigation, it was determined that the juvenile subject had shot a hog from the roadway. He was cited accordingly.

Officer Yates and Reserve Officer Hahr completed an investigation into another spotted fawn being killed. After identifying a suspect and conducting interviews, the subject was cited for taking a spotted fawn and numerous license violations.

Officer Yates received a complaint of roadway hunting with a description of the suspect vehicle. Arriving in the area, he located the vehicle and a short time later, two subjects exited the management area dragging a short horn buck. An interview revealed that they had also shot at another deer from the roadway before killing the short horn buck. They were charged accordingly.

Officers Yates, Homan, Gore, and Tison responded to a complaint of a morning duck shoot. Arriving at the location, the officers split up and converged from all sides of the swamp and located two subjects in possession of 26 ducks. The area was baited, and the subjects did not have plugs in their guns. They were cited accordingly.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Maltais was on land patrol conducting license and game compliance in the Eglin Wildlife Management Area. The officer saw a parked vehicle at the Jackson North Management Unit, an area designated for early archery season. All subjects and vehicles are required to check in before heading to their tree stand for this area. Each subject who checks in receives a check station pass, which is required to be displayed on the dashboard of the vehicle. The parked vehicle did not display the check-in pass. Officer Maltais located the subject who was still seated in the tree stand. The officer quickly noticed the field surrounding the subject was illegally baited with beets. The subject was cited and issued a notice to appear citation for placing bait within a wildlife management area.

Officers Pifer and Schmitt were on vessel patrol conducting boating safety and resource inspections in the Destin Pass. The officers saw a vessel returning from the Gulf of Mexico with fishing gear displayed. The officers stopped the vessel and during the safety inspection determined the boat was coming back from a fishing trip. The resource inspection revealed two undersized gray triggerfish. The season for gray triggerfish is closed. The boat operator was cited and issued a notice to appear citation for harvesting gray triggerfish during closed season.

Officer Corbin responded to a complaint of a bear in garbage in Mary Esther. Upon arrival, the officer spoke with the complainant and located the bear in a vacant lot in a tree. Officer Corbin also saw a household garbage bag lying at the base of the tree. The homeowner was issued a non-compliance letter for failure to secure garbage can.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Hahr and Lieutenant Clark were patrolling in the Blackwater Wildlife Management Area when they heard two shots. Officer Hahr coursed the shots to a location in the management area. He went to that location and saw a subject exiting private property with a rifle. The subject stated that he shot two does. When they checked the deer, they discovered that he had killed three deer, two over the daily bag limit. The subject was cited for taking over the bag limit of antlerless deer. The meat from two deer was seized and donated to a charitable organization.

Officer Hahr was patrolling private property during crossbow season when he heard two rifle shots. He located the area from where the shots came and saw a subject in the process of cleaning a deer. Both deer had bullet wounds and no sign of a broadhead wound. The subject admitted to taking the deer with a rifle. Both illegally harvested deer were seized and donated to a charitable organization. The subject was cited for taking deer with a firearm during crossbow season.

Officer Ramos located an illegal bait site on Eglin Wildlife Management Area. A person planted a non-native seed as an attractant for deer and cut small oak trees down to create a shooting lane from a ladder stand. Later, the suspect also laid corn on the ground near the illegal food plot. Officer Ramos found the man actively hunting on the site and after a brief interview, the suspect admitting to cutting the trees, planting the food plot and spreading the corn. The subject was issued criminal citations for the violations. Additionally, the suspect's access to the Eglin WMA was revoked for one year by Eglin Range Patrol security forces.

Officer Ramos saw a vehicle leaving Eglin Wildlife Management Area and conducted a traffic stop to check for licenses and permits. During the inspection, the officer learned that the suspect didn't have a valid driver's license. Additionally, the subject had dug up and removed several bags of expended ammunition from Eglin property. Range patrol was called, and the subject was issued a Notice of Violation for digging/disturbing ground on the WMA, a violation that all users who access the reservation are made aware of when an entry permit is granted. The subject's access to Eglin was revoked for one year due to the violation. Officer Ramos also issued the appropriate citation to the suspect for driving with a suspended license.

Officer Cushing was driving across a bridge and saw a canoe drifting in Pensacola Bay. The canoe displayed a dive flag but there wasn't anybody in or near the vessel which was nearly a half mile from the closest bridge. Officer Cushing proceeded to a local marina to respond by patrol vessel. Officers Ramos and Land responded to assist.

Officer Ramos contacted FWC biologists who already had a boat in the water. With the help of the FWC biologist team, Officer Ramos began searching the bridge spans for a possible missing diver while Officer Land used binoculars to direct Officer Cushing to the canoe. Officer Cushing retrieved the canoe out of the water and placed it in his patrol vessel. A brief time later, Officer Ramos and the FWC biologists found three men swimming along the bridge spans heading towards a boat ramp which was about a quarter of a mile away. When the men got out of the water, two of them were borderline hypothermic from cold-water exposure. All three subjects had been spearfishing and had fish on their stringers. Officer Cushing returned the canoe to the subjects at the boat ramp. While the subjects were recovering from the cold water, a resource inspection of their speared fish was conducted. One subject was found to have speared a red drum, which is an illegal method of take. The red drum was also over the legal-size limit. The subject was issued citations for spearing a red drum and fishing without a saltwater license. All three men were issued warnings for other violations but remained grateful for the officers' response and assistance.

Officer Ramos was on patrol in Eglin Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and discovered fresh ATV tire sign. ATV use is prohibited on the WMA. A vehicle and empty ATV trailer were located on Eglin property and Officer Ramos recorded the vehicle information. Later, he saw the ATV on a Range Road and attempted to catch up to it. The person driving the ATV eluded the officer by cutting through a closed area and doubling back on extremely narrow roads. Officer Ramos contacted Lieutenant Berryman and asked him to stand by with the suspect's vehicle and trailer. When Lieutenant Berryman arrived at that location, the ATV had already been loaded on the trailer and the suspect was gone. Officer Ramos located the suspect's vehicle heading south on a highway. The truck was pulling the same trailer with the ATV that fled from Officer Ramos earlier. A traffic stop was conducted, and two subjects were interviewed. The subjects were not truthful at first and denied they had been on Eglin WMA. After further questioning, the subjects admitted they had been riding in the WMA on two separate occasions. The operator of the ATV admitted he knew he was supposed to have an Eglin range permit but did not. Both persons were cited for operating an ATV on a management area along with warnings for other violations.

Officer Ramos was on patrol in Eglin Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and saw a man exit a wooded area with a compound bow and arrows during a period when all hunting was prohibited within Eglin WMA. Officer Ramos interviewed the subject and he admitted that he had been hunting deer from a ladder stand. He was issued a notice to appear for attempting to take game during the closed season.

Officer Hutchinson received a complaint from a landowner about a subject trespassing on their private property. Officer Hutchinson drove to the property and located a vehicle parked on state forest property near the private property. He deployed K9 Zara who tracked from the subject's vehicle to the private property. While tracking, K9 Zara led Officer Hutchinson to a bag, a bucket and a shovel that were laying in the bushes. The bag and the bucket contained old bottles and other artifacts along with other tools used for digging. K9 Zara continued tracking until Officer Hutchinson heard a vehicle stop on

a nearby roadway. He heard two doors shut which were the subjects attempting to get away. He contacted a sheriff's deputy who was nearby and requested his help in locating the vehicle. A brief time later, the deputy stopped the vehicle and identified the male and female passengers as being the two whose truck was parked near the private property. After being interviewed, both subjects admitted to trespassing on the private property and digging for old bottles. They also admitted to fleeing the property when they heard the K9 team tracking towards them. Officer Hutchinson issued the subjects warnings for trespassing at the landowner's request. The artifacts taken were given back to the landowner.

WALTON COUNTY

Officer White located a subject hunting on Point Washington Wildlife Management Area after seeing a vehicle parked along the roadway. An inspection of the area the subject was hunting revealed bait had been placed on the ground to attract deer. The subject was cited for the violation.

Officer White approached a subject fishing Choctawhatchee Bay from the shoreline. As he approached the subject, he saw a redfish on the ground near the subject. The subject had not measured the fish and it was well under the legal-size limit. The subject was cited for possession of undersized redfish.

While off duty, Lieutenant Goodwin saw subjects riding ATVs on Nokuse Plantation. Officer Tison responded to assist and contacted the subjects, who admitted to seeing posted "No Trespassing" signs prior to entering the property. Officer Tison contacted the land manager for Nokuse Plantation, who wanted charges pressed for trespass. Officer Tison charged each subject with trespass.

Officer Brooks responded to the location of an off-duty deputy after the deputy saw someone shoot from a roadway. Upon arrival, Officer Brooks saw a doe deer that the subject had shot from his vehicle in a field. The subject did not have permission to hunt the property and was charged for taking wildlife from a public road.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Officer Parrish was on patrol in the Sunny Hills area when he saw a subject in possession of a doe deer during closed season. He was cited for taking doe deer during closed season.

Officer Homan and Greene responded to a complaint on Choctawhatchee Wildlife Management Area of a subject driving on closed roads. Upon arrival, the suspect vehicle was located behind a locked gate on a closed road. While waiting, Officer Homan heard shooting and closed the distance to observe subjects shooting ducks after hours. The three subjects were cited accordingly for shooting ducks after hours and driving on a closed road in the WMA.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

WASHINGTON COUNTY

South Okaloosa officers and bear management personnel teamed together to canvas and educate a community experiencing a high volume of nuisance bears. Approximately 300 duplex/units were canvassed, and 25 non-compliance letters were issued. The community was very appreciative of FWC educational efforts.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

BAKER

A suspect caught by FWC officers committing fraud for selling illegal hunting leases was recently sentenced to three years in prison, followed by two years of probation. The court also ordered restitution to be paid to the victims. A trespass complaint to Officer Gill from the legal landowner revealed that multiple hunters had paid the suspect for leases that he had no legal authority to provide. The suspect had been paid more than \$10,000 for the worthless leases, and also wrote worthless checks to the legal landowner while attempting to lease the property himself. He was charged with fraud for swindling the hunters and for insufficient funds on the checks he wrote, both third degree felonies. Both the landowner and hunters expressed their gratitude to the FWC for catching this individual.

Officers Tyler and Fanelli received information about a truck with an illegal short antler buck in the bed. The officers recognized the description of the truck and owner from a previous encounter during turkey season. They contacted the owner and met with him to inspect the buck. After interviewing the owner and his passenger friend, they determined that the passenger shot and killed the short antler buck. The passenger was cited accordingly.

Officer Gill was patrolling Osceola WMA when he heard dogs actively chasing a deer. The dogs were heading towards his location. Subjects soon arrived and shot the deer near where Officer Gill was concealed. The deer was a buck with one 7-inch antler. The shooter was cited for taking an undersized deer.

CITRUS COUNTY

Lieutenant Jones, Investigator Thomason and Officer Canfield were dispatched to a hit and run boating collision involving two vessels on Lake Rousseau. The occupants on the striking vessel were ejected from their vessel and one of the occupants in the other vessel was injured by the impact. The two subjects who were ejected swam back to their vessel and fled from the scene of the incident leaving the victim's vessel with a

two-foot long hole just above the waterline. Realizing they were taking in water, the victim's vessel headed back to the boat ramp. As they neared the boat ramp, they saw the vessel that struck them and went towards them to get their information. As they neared the striking vessel, the operator grounded the vessel and fled on foot. Once law enforcement arrived, it was determined the striking vessel was stolen. A search for the occupant(s) of the striking vessel was launched by multiple law enforcement agencies in the area. After investigating leads and merging resources, FWC Investigator Thomason and Citrus County Sheriff's Detective Cutlip were able to locate the individual who stole the vessel. The subject was arrested and cited for two felony counts, two misdemeanors and two UBCs.

Officers Ulrich and Creel were on foot patrol surveilling an area of shoreline used for fishing. They saw a subject catch a fish, place it inside of a 5-gallon bucket and quickly walk to his vehicle. The officers followed the individual and announced their presence as FWC officers to conduct a fisheries resource inspection. The subject immediately fled with the fish and threw it into the water before the officers could conduct the inspection. The subject was cited for interference of an FWC officer and licensing violations.

Officers Ulrich and Browning were on foot patrol conducting surveillance on a pond containing an American alligator. Officer Ulrich located evidence of bait used to entice alligators on the water's edge. The officers saw numerous vehicles approach the pond during the early morning hours and six individuals use lights in a manner capable of disclosing the presence of an alligator in the pond. The six subjects were actively attempting to take the alligator by means of bow and arrow and fishing rods and reels equipped with hooks and restraining lines. The officers interviewed the six subjects who admitted to attempting to take American alligator and not possessing the proper permitting and licensing as required. The officers documented the events with surveillance equipment and all six subjects were cited accordingly for the violations.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Lieutenant Humphries located a hunting stand baited with tubs of peanut butter while on patrol in the Adams Tract of Troy Springs Wildlife Management Area. On Thanksgiving morning, Lieutenant Humphries returned to the area and discovered a parked vehicle on a closed road near the baited site. Upon tracking the foot sign leading away from the vehicle, a subject was found hunting over the baited area. The individual was issued a notice to appear for hunting over bait and issued a citation for operating a vehicle on a closed road.

ALACHUA COUNTY

Officer Drew received information about someone who had possibly shot a doe deer on private property. The witness told Officer Drew that he heard a single gunshot while hunting and walked over to the other piece of property to see if the subjects needed any help. The subjects told him that they thought they shot a small buck deer but saw no

blood and would come back in the morning to see if they could locate the deer. The witness further stated that the subjects told him they wanted no help and ultimately told him that they did not know what kind of deer was shot. That night, Officer's Drew and Reith responded to the location of the incident which occurred in a peanut field. Officer Drew located a game trail and approximately 25 yards in the woods, blood was located on the ground. Officers Drew and Reith followed a blood trail for approximately 300 yards and located a doe deer lying on the ground. The doe deer stood up, ran off, and could not be recovered. The next morning Officer Drew returned to the field and saw a truck driving in the area. The two males stated they were the subjects from the afternoon before. The shooter stated that he shot what he thought was a small buck. The shooter did not have any knowledge of antler restrictions in the deer management unit in which he was hunting. The shooter further stated that he did not know what he had shot because it was getting dark but thought he possibly saw antlers. The subject's rifle was seized as evidence and photographs of the blood was obtained for the case. Charges will be direct filed through the state attorney's office for attempting to take doe deer during open season.

While Officer Drew was investigating the doe deer case, he discovered via dispatch the other subject with the defendant was a registered sex offender and a convicted felon. Both subjects told Officer Drew that they were hunting with a muzzle loader. Officers Drew and Stanley located the muzzle loader and found that the rifle was not legal for the convicted felon to possess. The muzzle loader was a newer model, a Thompson Center 50 Caliber with an in-line firing system. The rifle further used a primer ignition system for the rifle to discharge. Per state statute this made the muzzle loader illegal for the convicted felon to possess. After consulting with the state attorney's office, it was determined that the firearm be seized, and charges direct filed for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer McDonald saw an individual parked in the ditch. As he passed by the vehicle he watched a man lift a doe deer and place it on the tailgate of the vehicle. Officer McDonald turned around and initiated contact with the man. Officer McDonald noticed that the deer was an unreported road-kill. A rifle was in plain view in the front seat of the vehicle. Officer McDonald knew the man and believed the man was a convicted felon – which he confirmed. The loaded rifle was seized, and charges will be filed for possession of firearm by a convicted felon.

Officers McDonald, Nichols, Yates, Johnston and Starling participated in a detail at Alligator Lake targeting the waterfowl hunt. During the detail, 22 vessels and 54 subjects were checked. One citation was issued for unplugged shotgun and numerous citations and warnings for license violations.

Officer Johnston received an anonymous tip regarding household garbage found dumped in the Osceola Wildlife Management Area. With the help of Officer Yates, the officers tracked down two suspects who confessed to the violation. The total weight of

the garbage was 67 lbs. Two criminal complaints will be filed with the state attorney's office for littering with the total weight exceeding 15 lbs.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Officers Boone and Fowler located a parked vehicle along the Steinhatchee river while on patrol in Steinhatchee Springs Wildlife Management Area. They tracked foot sign leading away from the vehicle to the nearby river. The officers saw an individual in the Steinhatchee River digging up the river bottom and sifting through the remains. Further investigation revealed that the subject was also in possession of cannabis and paraphernalia. The individual was issued a notice to appear for possession of cannabis, paraphernalia and destruction of state land.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

CITRUS COUNTY

Officers Reid and Banks were dispatched to a disabled vessel in the Seven Cabbage area. The occupants were all teenagers and had family members out trying to find them. Officers Reid and Banks launched an airboat and began searching. Not long after launching, a bad thunderstorm came through. Their GPS system and computer failed, but they continued diligently searching for the group, located them and got them to safety.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

SUWANNEE COUNTY

Officers Boone and Fowler conducted an outreach event at Branford High School. Both officers spoke to a class of 40 students on state laws that help protect reptiles like the alligator snapping turtle. They also covered Florida's diverse wildlife and the natural ecosystem to increase awareness of the FWC.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

BREVARD COUNTY

Lieutenant Bonds, Officer Eller and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Officer Bushnell arrested two subjects for hunting waterfowl over bait. The suspects were arrested during opening day of waterfowl season last year in the same location by the same officers. The officers watched from a concealed location as the men entered the area and actively searched for the officers. The officers could hear the men discussing where game wardens could

possibly be hiding, and if they would get caught two years in a row. Both subjects were arrested, and their firearms seized.

Officer Mendelson, K9 Officer Hadwin, K9 Blue, and Officer Hocker conducted airboat patrol on Lake Winder. One resource inspection/license check led to an individual that was duck hunting and not able to produce a Federal Duck Stamp or a migratory bird permit. The individual was issued a citation for no Federal Duck Stamp and a warning for no migratory bird permit.

Officer Delano saw several men fishing while on patrol at a local causeway. After approaching to conduct a resource inspection, he noticed several cast nets and coolers in their truck bed. Officer Cybula arrived on scene to assist. A resource inspection revealed the men were in possession of six stone crabs in whole condition, five undersized stone crab claws, and one egg bearing stone crab. Additionally, the men were in possession of four undersized sheepshead and one undersized mangrove snapper. Several citations and warnings were issued for the offenses.

While on foot patrol, Officer Balgo saw a large group of people near the shoreline. As the officer approached, he saw a cast net and a bucket near a grill. A resource inspection located two undersized gray snapper and one undersized sheepshead being cooked whole on the grill. Officer Balgo also located one undersized gray snapper in the bucket. One of the individuals admitted to catching the fish with the cast net. The individual was cited accordingly.

Officer Balgo saw a group of individuals fishing along the seawall. A resource inspection located an undersized red drum in one of the individual's bucket. The individual was cited accordingly.

While on patrol, Officer Balgo saw two individuals fishing along the rocks. He located a cooler containing five sheepshead, three of which were undersized. One of the individuals admitted to catching the undersized sheepshead. The individual was cited accordingly.

While on foot patrol in the early morning hours, Officer Rasey located two subjects fishing. When asked if they had any fish in their cooler, one individual advised there were catfish inside. Upon opening the cooler, a red drum was located along with catfish. When asked about the red drum, the subject who caught it advised it was exactly 27 inches. The red drum measured almost 30 inches. The individual was cited for the violation.

Officer Marroquin was dispatched to a call reference a Wildlife Alert for a subject in possession of pygmy rattlesnakes. Possession of venomous reptiles is prohibited unless a subject is properly licensed. The tip included a subject's name and that the information was on Facebook. The information displayed a pygmy rattlesnake in a glass tank. Officer Marroquin requested the assistance of Captive Wildlife Investigator Saunders in the investigation. Once the suspect was identified it was determined he

was in possession of two pygmy rattlesnakes, which were not properly caged. The snakes were released to FWC custody and the subject was cited appropriately.

Officer Mendelson, K9 Officer Hadwin, K9 Blue, and Officer Hocker conducted airboat patrol on Lake Winder and later foot patrol into the Upper St. Johns WMA. K9 Blue led the way into the woods following a scent trail. Resource inspections led to an investigation about several antlerless deer that were harvested earlier that day. The following day, the subjects met the officers at a local processor where three of the four deer were located. The fourth deer was brought in a cooler to the location. The subjects admitted to taking the deer on the same morning. This information was forwarded to the State Attorney's office. Subsequently, the subjects were issued citations for over the bag limit of antlerless deer.

Lieutenant Bonds was contacted by FWC Investigators out of the North Central Region about a trophy class white-tailed deer that was killed illegally in Kansas and brought back to Florida. Lieutenant Bonds and Officer Eller worked closely with Kansas Game Warden Brook and exchanged information on the case. Lieutenant Bonds and Officer Eller tracked down the suspect who resided in Brevard County. The officers conducted an interview, obtained information on the illegal harvest, and identified a Kansas outfitter who was also involved. The officers located and seized the illegal trophy rack and cape at a local taxidermist. The skullcap and cape were not properly cleaned or processed before being transported into Florida. This is a concern because Kansas has been identified as a state in which Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) has been detected. The FWC takes CWD very seriously and is taking an aggressive approach to prevent it from entering Florida. To guard against importing CWD from other states, it is illegal to bring into Florida the whole carcass of any deer, elk, moose, caribou or other cervid from areas where CWD has been detected. CWD is a contagious, fatal neurological disease that has been found in captive and free-ranging deer, moose and elk in 25 states and 3 Canadian provinces. Due to the size of the deer, the individual is facing several serious penalties from Kansas wildlife officials. In addition, FWC Division of Law Enforcement is addressing the importation of an unsafe deer specimen from a state where CWD has been detected.

While on patrol near the Highway 192 bridge over the Indian River in Melbourne, Officer DuBose saw three men wading in the water with a cast net. He conducted a resource inspection and found the men in possession of 50 sheepshead, 42 of them being undersized and 26 over the bag limit. They were also in possession of 2 undersized black drum and 1 undersized mangrove snapper. The mangrove snapper was also harvested by illegal method. Appropriate citations were issued.

PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Cheshire conducted a fisheries inspection on a subject cast netting in Crescent Lake. The subject stated he was catching tilapia in the net but upon inspection Officer Cheshire located 11 bream mixed in the bag. The subject was cited for taking freshwater fish by unlawful method and the bream were returned to the water alive.

Officer Cheshire was on patrol in Lake George Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when he heard a gunshot. He located a vehicle in the area of the shot and contacted the occupants. The subjects were hunting raccoons with dogs and were in possession of dead raccoons. The subjects were cited for taking raccoons at night during a closed season and unlawful use of hunting dogs in the WMA.

Officer Chriest heard a single gunshot come from within Ocala Wildlife Management Area (WMA). She and Officer Jones responded to the area and Officer Jones conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle for failing to dim their headlights. Officer Jones smelled the odor of burnt cannabis coming from the vehicle. An investigation revealed that two subjects were in possession of cocaine, approximately 27 grams of cannabis, and numerous devices for drug use. Several long guns were found in the vehicle but there was no conclusive evidence that they shot after legal hunting hours. Both subjects were cited for possession of cocaine and possession of cannabis over 20 grams.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

With the arrival of cooler temperatures, activity at the south end of Lake Ponte Vedra at the Guana Wildlife Management Area (WMA) has significantly increased. Officers Harris, Greenier, Lawrence, Thomas, Lawshe, and Ramsey have worked together to set up regular patrols to address several complaints about subjects unlawfully fishing from the WMA dam/water control structure. They have issued multiple citations and written warnings for the following violations:

- Unauthorized entry/public access into the dam structure (currently under construction and surrounded by fencing with posted signage which prohibits entry)
- Cast netting within 50 yards of the dam structure
- Harvesting finfish by unlawful method/cast net
- Possession of undersized snook
- Exceeding the daily bag limit of snook
- Failure to possess snook permit
- Possession of undersized redfish
- Failure to possess a saltwater fishing license

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

While on patrol at the Sebastian Inlet State Park, Officer Cybula saw a vessel in violation of the manatee zone. At the boat ramp the officer met the vessel and informed the operator of the violation. During the interaction it was discovered that the operator had been fishing. A resource inspection revealed the man was in possession of six undersized flounder. A citation was issued for undersized flounder and a warning for violation of a manatee zone.

While on patrol at Sebastian Inlet State Park, Officer Delano conducted a resource inspection on a vessel returning from fishing. Three men were on board the vessel and were in possession of three snook. One of the men admitted to catching two of the snook, one of which was over the legal slot size. A citation was issued for possession of over the bag limit and possession of over the slot size snook.

Officer Marroquin was dispatched to a vessel accident at the Sebastian Inlet State Park. While finishing up his investigation a subject stated that individuals were keeping undersized flounder in the park. Officers Marroquin and Kearney went to the area and found two subjects fishing who admitted to catching flounder. After inspecting their catch, they were found to be in possession of five undersized flounder. Both subjects admitted to catching the fish and were cited accordingly.

MARION COUNTY

Officer Dias and Lieutenant Yetter were conducting surveillance at Sunnyhill Restoration Area in Ocklawaha. Officer Dias was on the south end of Sunnyhill when he saw an airboat enter the property. Two adult male subjects exited the airboat with rifles and hunting equipment. Officer Dias contacted the two subjects and determined they were there to hunt. A criminal history check found that one of the men had multiple felony convictions. The subject admitted that he had not had his rights restored. The two men were issued notices to appear for hunting the closed area, and the second subject was arrested for possession of firearm by a convicted felon.

Officer Chriest contacted two adult male subjects in a bass boat at Orange Springs Boat Ramp for a resource inspection. Officer Chriest found the vessel had 12 black bass onboard. The vessel operator admitted to taking two bass over the limit. The officer issued the operator a notice to appear for taking over the limit of black bass, and an infraction to the other subject for not having a resident freshwater fishing license.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer Pelzel had information that two adult males may have been cast netting and keeping fish illegally in the Port Orange area at night. After locating and observing the subjects, Officer Pelzel found under the legal-size limit of snook, mangrove snapper and black drum in their possession. They were issued criminal notices to appear for the violations.

Officer Goodreau had information that there may be poaching of snook on the Ponce Inlet jetties at night. After observing subjects attempt to catch fish from the jetty, he approached and checked their catch. A subject was in possession of oversize snook. Another subject was in possession of a snook under the legal limit. Both were issued criminal notices to appear.

Officer Pelzel was checking shoreline subjects in the Daytona Beach area. When Officer Pelzel began to approach an individual fishing from the shore, he picked up his

gear and began to walk in the opposite direction, remove a stringer with fish and toss it into the water. After a brief conversation, the subject retrieved the stringer of fish and was issued a notice to appear for possessing undersized mangrove snapper and black drum.

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Officers Mendelson, Hocker and Stelzer conducted vessel patrols on the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes. A vessel/resource inspection led to discovering an individual with over the bag limit of black crappie. While Officers Mendelson and Hocker conducted that inspection, Officer Stelzer inspected another nearby vessel and found an individual with oversized black bass. Officer Hocker issued both subjects a notice to appear for the violations and several boating safety warnings. All illegal fish were photographed for evidence and returned to the water.

Officer McLendon responded to Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area (WMA) reference a subject taking an undersized antlered deer. The subject was located and admitted to shooting the deer with his rifle during the hunt. Upon measuring the antler of the buck, it was under the 10-inch main beam minimum or three points on one side requirement for the WMA. The deer was seized as evidence and the subject was issued a misdemeanor citation for the violation.

Officer Mendelson, K9 Officer Hadwin, K9 Blue, and Officer Hocker conducted airboat patrol on Lake Winder. The officers heard a rifle shot nearby, and located a vessel anchored in the water near the shot. The officers and K9 Blue conducted foot patrol in the Upper St. Johns Wildlife Management Area (WMA) to find the source of the shots. Three individuals were seen dragging a deer into a campsite across a local ranch fence line. K9 Blue tracked the fresh drag back to where the deer was killed. The individual's story and the K9 track were different and he admitted to shooting the deer across the private property fence line and dragging it back onto the WMA. Felony charges are being directly filed with the state attorney's office for trespass by projectile.

ORANGE COUNTY

Officers Mendelson and Hocker investigated a tip about two tree stands that were on Orlando Utility Commission (OUC) property. They noticed a truck parked at the entrance to the adjacent property and found two individuals in tree stands on OUC property. The individuals were hunting and in possession of rifles. Felony charges are being directly filed with the state attorney's office for armed trespass.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officers McDonough and Demeter assisted with the annual Basket Brigade. The annual event provides much needed food to needy families, so they can cook a Thanksgiving meal. The officers passed out baskets of food throughout Volusia County.

BREVARD COUNTY

Lieutenant Lightsey participated in the annual Youth Outdoor Olympics. This event focuses on introducing and teaching youth about hunting, fishing, kayaking, archery, shooting safety, and team building. This seventh through twelfth grade event was attended by over one hundred youth with the eleventh-grade team taking top honors.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Lieutenants Trusley and Lightsey, along with Officer McLendon responded to a search and rescue in Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area involving a lost subject after sunset. Lieutenant Trusley and Officer McLendon conducted a grid search of the area on foot while calling out for the subject. The officers were able to hear a whistle being blown in the distance and eventually located the elderly subject near a slough. The subject was safe, but out of water and fatigued from walking through heavy vegetation and mud for miles. The officers assisted the subject by carrying his gear and providing water while returning him to his friends.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Lieutenant Frantz noticed a boat as it was docking at Stump Pass Marina. One of the occupants took a white five-gallon bucket out of the boat and began walking towards the filet table. The occupant saw Lieutenant Frantz, set the bucket down and walked back to the vessel. Lieutenant Frantz approached the bucket and saw it contained five redfish, four of which were undersized. Charlotte County has an emergency rule banning the harvest of redfish due to the red tide. Citations and warnings were issued, and the redfish were returned to the water.

HARDEE COUNTY

Officer Karr was on patrol when he noticed a pick-up truck parked in an orange grove off the roadway. Officer Karr also noticed a man walking in the grove carrying what looked to be a rifle. Officer Karr stopped and asked the man what he was doing. The man responded saying he and his son were dove hunting and had killed three mourning doves. Officer Karr asked if he had permission to be in the grove to hunt doves. The

man said he had permission, but he could not provide the last name of the person who gave him permission or any contact information. After talking to the grove manager, Officer Karr determined that the man did not have permission to hunt in the grove. The subject was arrested for armed trespass and his shotgun was seized for evidence. Charges will also be direct filed with the State Attorney's Office for contributing to the delinquency of a minor due to the presence of the man's son.

HERNANDO COUNTY

Lieutenant Kevin Grover checked a subject in the Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area (WMA) who was found to be a convicted felon. The subject was hunting with a modern firearm in his possession. The subject admitted to not having his right to possess a firearm restored and was arrested and taken to the Hernando County Jail.

Lieutenant Grover was checking a bait site in the Chassahowitzka WMA which FWC Hernando officers had been working as a directed conservation patrol. Lieutenant Grover located a subject in his tree-stand, hunting over the bait. The subject admitted to placing the bait in the WMA but had not had a chance to hunt it until that day. The subject was cited accordingly.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

While on land patrol in Highlands County, Officer Smith and Officer Catalano received a request for assistance about a boating accident involving two FWC officers and one civilian. The boating accident occurred on Lake Okeechobee near Harney Pond Canal Boat Ramp in Glades County. Officers Smith and Catalano brought a Southwest Region airboat to assist and met with Lieutenant Fugate and Investigator Ervin, as well as local FWC officers and sheriff's deputies. Once on scene to assess the situation and assist with various tasks, Lieutenant Fugate took the deputies to the scene by airboat to photograph and document the area of collision and investigate the crash. Officer Smith assisted local FWC officers with returning the equipment of the officers involved in the accident to their proper locations. He also visited Officer Dial in the hospital and provided much needed comfort to the family. Officer Catalano drove the subject involved in the accident back to his vehicle located in Moore Haven, along with his dog and personal belongings. Officers Catalano and Smith assisted with retrieving the vessel from the water and transporting it to the Fisheating Creek evidence storage facility. The investigation is ongoing in this case.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Officer Gonzales was on land patrol in the area of Lavender Road in Hillsborough County when he saw individuals fishing on Southwest Florida Water Management District property. The men walked past several "No Trespassing" signs to enter the property. The subjects were charged criminally for simple trespass and will have to appear in court for their violations.

While on water patrol in Tampa Bay, Officer Wilkins and Lieutenant Van Trees saw a vessel operating at night with no navigation lights. The officers initiated a stop to address the violation. As the officers pulled up to the vessel, they could hear bottles clanking and saw empty beer and liquor bottles on the deck of the vessel. Officer Wilkins began a safety inspection with the operator and noticed signs of impairment to include the operator not being able to produce a type IV throwable device despite standing right over it. Officer Wilkins conducted seated field sobriety exercises with the operator and arrested him for boating under the influence. Upon searching the subject prior to transporting him to jail, it was discovered the operator had a vape pen with THC oil inside. The subject was booked into the Hillsborough County Jail for boating under the influence, felony possession of THC, and he also received citations for refusal to submit to a breath test, not having navigation lights on at night and failure to have sufficient number of life vests.

LEE COUNTY

Officer Winton conducted a retail fisheries inspection at a local fish market in Fort Myers. During the inspection, he located twenty-two undersized stone crab claws for sale. An investigation was conducted, and the owner of the business was issued a notice to appear for attempting to sell undersized stone crab claws.

Officer Winton and Lieutenant Spoede were on water patrol when they saw a sunken vessel on a sandbar near Fort Myers Beach. The officers identified the owner of the vessel and are attempting to contact him. The investigation is ongoing.

Officer Winton conducted a retail inspection at a seafood establishment near Sanibel Island. On a previous inspection, Officer Winton had warned the owner for failure to possess a retail license when selling saltwater products. During this inspection, it was determined that the owner still did not possess a valid retail license, for which she was issued a notice to appear.

Officer Winton was on vessel patrol in the Caloosahatchee River when he stopped a vessel to conduct a safety inspection. As he approached the vessel, Officer Winton noticed that the operator did not maintain a proper lookout, a possible indicator of impairment. During a boating safety inspection, the operator showed additional signs of impairment and agreed to perform field sobriety tasks. Upon performing poorly on the tasks, the operator was placed under arrest for boating under the influence and was transported to the Lee County Jail. The subject was also cited for failure to submit to a breath test, operating an unregistered vessel and received warnings for failure to maintain a proper lookout and many safety gear violations.

MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Davidson was on land patrol around the area of Bunker Hill Road working an area where he had come across illegal hunting activity several days earlier. While on patrol, he witnessed two subjects kill a deer near Mosaic property. The deer was killed

on private property; however, it was killed without a deer permit. Also, the subjects had trespassed to place a feeder and other deer attractants on Mosaic land. The subject who killed the deer was charged criminally for trespassing and written an infraction for no deer permit. He will have to appear in court for his criminal violation.

PINELLAS COUNTY

While on water patrol, Officer Specialist Bibeau saw a vessel returning to a nearby boat ramp. He contacted the occupants of the vessel and conducted a fisheries inspection which revealed three undersized red grouper and one undersized and out of season triggerfish. Officer Specialist Bibeau read all the occupants their Miranda rights and, after questioning the group, one of the occupants admitted to catching all of the illegal fish. A query on the subject through agency files found that he had previously been cited for possession of undersized and over the daily bag limit of mangrove snapper. Officer Specialist Bibeau cited the subject for possession of undersized red grouper, over the daily bag limit of red grouper, undersized triggerfish and out of season triggerfish.

Officer Specialist Bibeau saw an individual carrying a cast net along a seawall while working an area where the bag limit for mullet is only five per harvester per day. From a concealed location he watched the individual for approximately four hours. The individual began fishing with the use of the cast net and caught multiple mullet. Officer Specialist Bibeau contacted the individual as he was preparing to leave the area and conducted a fisheries inspection. He found the individual to be in possession of twelve mullet. After conducting a records search through agency files, Officer Specialist Bibeau found that the individual had been named in a prior intel report for being a subject known to violate the five-mullet bag limit. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for violation of the five-mullet bag limit.

POLK COUNTY

Officer Adams and Officer Munkwitz responded to a complaint of subject who had taken a wild turkey illegally from the C-37 Canal on the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes area. When the officers arrived, they located the subject and saw his boat, which was beached on the bank of the canal. There was a freshly killed gobbler onboard along with a 12-gauge shotgun. The subject was interviewed and provided a written statement in which he admitted to taking the turkey with the shotgun. The subject will be charged for taking the gobbler by illegal method during crossbow season.

Officer Munkwitz and Officer Adams responded to an incident at Avon Park Air Force Range. The call was regarding a subject who shot and killed a short-horned buck and brought it to the check station. When the officers arrived, they inspected the deer and measured its longest antler, which was approximately nine inches in length. The officers interviewed the subject, who provided a written statement admitting to taking the deer with a 12-gauge shotgun. The subject was issued a notice to appear for taking a deer that did not have one antler with a main beam greater than ten inches in length.

Officer Carter and Officer Boyer were conducting water patrol on the Winter Haven Chain of Lakes. While patrolling a canal that connects Lake Idlewild and Lake Cannon, Officer Carter saw a white male standing on the shoreline. With the aid of binoculars, Officer Carter saw a five-gallon bucket next to the subject as he was actively throwing a cast net. As Officer Carter and Boyer approached the subject he continued to throw the cast net a few more times before walking away from the bucket. Officer Carter conducted a resource inspection which revealed that the subject did not have a valid freshwater fishing license and three blue gill fish were found in the bucket. Post Miranda warning, the man admitted the bucket was his and that he had caught the blue gill fish with the cast net. He also informed Officers Carter and Boyer that he had commercial fished in the past and knew he was not allowed to keep game fish. The subject was issued a notice to appear for illegal method of catching game fish and given a written warning for not having a fishing license.

Officer DeWeese and Officer Jarrett were on water patrol on Lake Kissimmee. The officers saw two vessels fishing close together and conducted fishery inspections on both vessels. During the fishery inspections, the officers found subjects on both vessels to be in violation of the daily bag limit of crappie, which is twenty-five fish per person per day. The officers seized and photographed the fish and returned them to the lake. The subject on both vessels were issued citations for over the daily bag limit of crappie.

SARASOTA COUNTY

Officer Grenz was on land patrol around Siesta Key Drive. She performed a fisheries inspection on an individual fishing from one of the bridges. Officer Grenz found that the subject had caught and kept over the bag limit of mangrove snapper as well as being in possession of undersized mangrove snapper. The subject was also uncooperative with Officer Grenz and would not provide a valid name because he had a warrant out for his arrest. Once the subject's identity was determined, he was criminally cited for possession of over the bag limit of mangrove snapper, undersized mangrove snapper and giving a false name to a law enforcement officer. He was taken to the Sarasota County Jail and will have to appear in court for his violations.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Birchfield worked alongside Charlotte County Sheriff's Office and Charlotte County Fire Department on a two-day power boat race event: "The Englewood Beach Water Fest." The combined effort provided safety for the 300 plus recreational boaters which were in attendance to watch the races and for the power boats during each race.

DESOTO/HARDEE/POLK COUNTIES

Officer Livingston, Officer Geeraerts, Officer Franks and Lieutenant Bontrager participated at several schools for the “Great American Teach In.” The officers discussed what their job involved daily as FWC officers. explaining the use of vessels and vehicles to conduct patrols. They also related how officers sometimes leave their cars and boats to go on foot to interact with resource users. The officers also talked about the importance of wearing life jackets on a boat and going out and enjoying the Florida outdoors. Students were given the opportunity to see an alligator and learn how important it is to never feed alligators in the wild. The officers spoke to approximately 1,000 students throughout the week.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

Officer Fuller was conducting marine fisheries inspections at Mizell-Johnson State Park Boat Ramp when a center console Robalo entered through Whiskey Creek approaching the boat ramp. When the boat reached the dock, he noticed dive equipment and spear guns onboard the vessel. Officer Fuller asked for consent to come aboard and inspect their catch. He found the subjects harvested three hogfish by spear. Officer Fuller informed the subjects that hogfish are currently out-of-season and then confiscated the three hogfish. The subjects were issued misdemeanor notices to appear.

Officer Grant received information from a waterfowl check station operator at STA 1 that three subjects had harvested over their limit of fulvous whistling ducks. Officers Armstrong and Grant responded to the subject’s residence where they saw feathers and blood in the driveway. They contacted the homeowner who confirmed he had been in STA 1 with his son and nephew and they harvested several fulvous whistling ducks. The daily limit of fulvous whistling ducks is one per subject per day. The three subjects were in possession of nine fulvous whistling ducks. The son and nephew were issued warnings for possession of over-the-special bag limit and the father was issued a notice to appear (citation) for the violation and the ducks were seized as evidence.

MARTIN COUNTY

While conducting night hunting patrol, Officers Morrow and Ames saw someone shining a light in the Hungryland Wildlife Environmental Area. They located and saw two subjects actively engaged in fishing. After making contact and while conducting a fisheries inspection, Officer Morrow detected a strong smell of cannabis coming from the vehicle. The officers conducted a vehicle search and located two bags of cannabis and a smoking pipe. The two subjects admitted ownership of the cannabis and smoking pipe. The subjects each received a citation for possession of cannabis (less than 20 grams) and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Officers Hudson and McLeod were conducting surveillance on the Jensen Causeway when they saw an individual catch a tarpon. The individual shoved the tarpon inside of a five-gallon bucket, put a lid on the bucket, and gave it to his partner to take to their car. The officers contacted the subject carrying the bucket just as he was reaching his car. Upon inspection of the individual's bucket, the officers found a 29-inch tarpon. Both individuals were given a notice to appear (citations) for harvesting and possessing a tarpon.

Officer Hudson received information from an individual about a person using a large seine net to catch fish. Officer Hudson responded and with the help of the Martin County Sheriff Marine Units, they located two individuals using a seine net. Officer Hudson contacted the individuals and saw one subject pull a green cord to detach a small net that was connecting two large nets together. Officer Payne arrived on scene and the officers measured the seine net. They found the net to not have the proper markings on each end. The officers issued the subject a notice to appear citation.

While conducting vessel patrol, Officers Morrow, Hudson, and Ames initiated a stop on a vessel underway in the Intracoastal Waterway, with no red or green navigation lights. Upon contacting the operator, he displayed glassy bloodshot eyes and slurred speech. While retrieving required safety items from the vessel hatches, the subject threw a personal floatation device overboard once he had shown it to the officers and then quickly retrieved it. Officer Morrow then conducted SSFST's (Standardized Seated Field Sobriety Tasks) and determined the subject to be impaired. The subject's Breath Alcohol Content (BAC) was found to be .143. The legal limit for operating a vessel in the state of Florida is .08. The subject was transferred to Martin County Corrections deputies and cited for Boating Under the Influence (BUI).

While conducting land patrols in the Hungryland WEA, Officers Pecko and Morrow contacted two subjects emerging from the woods. They appeared to have been hunting migratory birds, Officer Pecko determined one subject had an unplugged shotgun, containing five shells. While addressing the violation with the subject, the other subject who was 16 years of age approached the officers smoking a cigarette. Officer Pecko issued a misdemeanor citation to the initial subject for hunting migratory birds with an unplugged shotgun. Officer Morrow then issued a tobacco citation to the underage subject.

Officer Hudson was patrolling the Jensen Beach Causeway when he conducted a fisheries inspection on an individual. The individual was found to be in possession of an undersized snook. The individual was given a notice to appear citation for possession of undersized snook.

Officer Hudson was patrolling the Stuart causeway when he saw three individuals come over the railing of the bridge with fishing poles and a fishing bag. Officer Hudson contacted the subjects to conduct a fisheries check. While conducting the fisheries check, one subject was actively rolling a cigarette with marijuana. The second subject had 43.4 grams of marijuana inside of his fishing bag and a scale used to weigh and

distribute the marijuana. The third subject had 5.2 grams of marijuana. The subject with 43.4 grams was arrested, and the other two subjects were given notice to appear citations.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

While responding to a call in the JW Corbett Management Area, Officers Morrow and Ames were approached by a subject operating a Utility Task Vehicle (UTV). While speaking with the subject, the officers saw that his eyes were bloodshot and that his speech was slurred. The subject advised that he had been engaged in hunting all day. An inspection of the UTV's interior boxes did not reveal any wildlife, however, multiple empty beer bottles and a prescription bottle containing half an oxycodone were located. The officers conducted SSFST's (Standardized Seated Field Sobriety Tasks) on the subject and determined he was impaired. Officer Webb arrived on scene and assisted with a search of the subject, which further yielded marijuana wax and marijuana buds. The subject was transported to the Palm Beach County Jail where the subject's Breath Alcohol Content (BAC) was found to be .089. The legal limit for operating a vehicle in the state of Florida is .08. The subject was booked into the Martin County Jail where he was cited for driving under the influence (DUI), felony possession of cannabis (Over 20 grams), and paraphernalia.

Lieutenants Russo, Hayes and Phillip responded to a call for assistance in the JW Corbett Area. Subjects, including a female who was eight months pregnant had been stuck in a UTV, off trail, over the night. Lieutenants Hayes and Russo located the subjects and escorted them to safety. A citation was issued to the driver of the UTV for illegally driving off trail.

Officers Godward and Brodbeck received information regarding a store selling undersized hogfish. Upon entering the business, the officers saw six undersized hogfish on ice in a display case for sale. The invoices for the illegal fish were obtained and the fish were seized for evidence. The seafood manager was issued a written warning for the violation. Officers Godward and Brodbeck proceeded to the wholesale dealer in Broward County that had supplied the illegal fish. Upon entering the warehouse, the officers saw numerous quality control and resource violations. Officers Brock and Nall arrived to assist with the inspection. A total of 82 undersize hogfish were seized from the business and the owner was issued two misdemeanor resource citations for undersize hogfish and fish in unwholesome condition. Warnings were issued for leakage onto product, temperature, fish not on ice, and undersized tripletail. A follow-up investigation of a wholesaler/importer in Miami resulted in the seizure of over 200 lbs. of undersize hogfish, as well as numerous other violations. The investigation is ongoing.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Investigator Turner investigated a complaint of possible trespass and possession of goliath grouper at the Florida Power and Light Nuclear Plant (FPL) in Jensen Beach. The complaint originated from FPL security personnel, based on social media

photographs. The photo showed two subjects posing with a goliath grouper in FPL property which is secured by a seven-foot-high chain-link fence topped with razor wire, and properly posted with "No Trespassing" signs. Based on interviews and other investigative techniques, Investigator Turner was able to identify and locate three subjects involved in the incident. After the investigation, one subject was cited for: one count of trespass on property other than a structure or conveyance. The remaining two subjects were cited for one count each: trespass on property other than structure or conveyance; and no person shall possess while in or on the waters of the state or land any goliath grouper.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

BROWARD COUNTY

While on patrol in the Dania area, Lieutenant L. McDonald and Officer Holcomb saw a subject driving erratically during a heavy rain. The driver of the vehicle was slowly swerving in and out of their lane. Lieutenant McDonald and Officer Holcomb conducted a traffic stop on the subject. After some observation of the driver they determined she was having a medical issue. EMS arrived and transported the driver to the hospital for treatment.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officer Stanton and Officer Cosculluela were on land-based water patrol at Watson Island Marina off the MacArthur Causeway. They observed two SUVs pull into the boat ramp, each pulling a trailer with two personal watercraft. They noticed that the tag of one of the vehicles was expired. After investigating, it was discovered that one of the drivers was driving with knowledge of a suspended license as well as operating a vehicle which was not registered and had a tag not assigned to it but affixed. Each of the PWCs were found to be in violation and neither of the trailers had tags. The subject who was driving the unregistered vehicle with a suspended license was taken into custody and cited for driving with a license suspended with knowledge, operating an unregistered vehicle, tag affixed not assigned and operating a trailer with no tag. The owner of the PWCs was cited accordingly and cited for operating a trailer with no tag.

Officer Stanton, Officer Osorio, Officer Cartaya and Officer Cosculluela were working a water patrol detail in the Spiny Lobster Sanctuary in Biscayne Bay. Officer Cartaya and Officer Stanton saw the subject actively harvesting spiny lobster within the Biscayne Bay Card Sound Spiny Lobster Sanctuary. Upon conducting a resource inspection, two spiny lobster were discovered on the vessel and seized. After reading the defendant Miranda rights, he confessed to harvesting the two-spiny lobster.

Officer Delgado and Officer Dominguez were on water patrol around Cape Florida Channel. They saw a vessel with fishing equipment displayed which they stopped, and a fisheries inspection was conducted. The inspection revealed 12 spiny lobster, 2 lion fish, 2 yellow jack and 2 mutton snapper. The mutton snapper was undersized, and the subject was cited accordingly.

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Hoppe was on water patrol in the Everglades National Park when he saw a vessel with three men fishing near Trout Cove. He conducted a resource inspection and found the men to be in possession of six undersized redfish. After the Miranda warning, two men admitted to catching the redfish and were cited for possession of undersized redfish and over the bag limit.

Lieutenant Peters was in plain clothes on water patrol in an unmarked vessel located near American Shoal, oceanside of Cudjoe Key. Lieutenant Peters saw a large barge under tow inside the Area to Be Avoided (ATBA) by vessels over 50 Meters (164 ft.). The ATBA acts as a buffer zone for our reef tract to allow for engine casualties and navigation errors. Lieutenant Peters traveled to directing astern of the large barge and documented the vessels current position and heading. Lieutenant Peters identified the barge by its name and hailing port. According to the barges US Documentation, the barge measures 222. 5 Meters/ 730 ft. Lieutenant Peters made contact with the captain of the tug conducting the tow on VHF and advised him of the violation and to leave the area. Lieutenant Peters issued the captain one Federal Notice of Violation and Assessment (NOVA) for violating the Area to Be Avoided by vessels over 50 Meters established by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Act.

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Araujo and McVaney were conducting migratory bird enforcement in the Picayune Strand State Forest. While patrolling, they heard shots coming from a common hunting area. Officer Araujo saw a vehicle parked nearby on an undesignated trail. They waited for the subjects to return to the vehicle and contacted the owner. Officers Araujo and McVaney conducted a resource inspection on the vehicle. The owner of the vehicle was issued a citation for operating a motorized vehicle off a designated trail.

Officers Oldsen and Araujo responded to a report of a person possibly catching snook with a cast net. Upon arrival, the officers saw a man walking on the beach with a cast net. As the officers continued to monitor the man, they saw him throw a bag into the bushes. The officers spoke to him and asked if he had thrown something in the bushes, he replied he had. The man retrieved the bag, it contained six undersized snook. Officer Oldsen asked permission to look in the cooler, it contained two mullet. The subject was cited for several violations including, illegal method, over the bag limit, and undersized snook.

Officers Araujo, McVaney and Kleis were conducting resource inspections on opening day of statewide waterfowl season. They worked the Ten Thousand Island National Refuge area and the Big Cypress National Park. One of the inspections revealed a subject who was using a shotgun that was not plugged, which made it capable of holding more than the legal maximum of three rounds. The subject had been cited in the past for hunting migratory game birds with an unplugged shotgun. The subject was issued a notice to appear citation for the violation.

COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Curbelo met with a group of youths enrolled in the “Youth Deer Hunt” class held at the Pepper Ranch in Immokalee. Officer Curbelo educated the youth about hunter safety and the importance of protecting our natural resources. Many of the students were first time hunters. The students were very engaged and asked Officer Curbelo many questions.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Johnston, Arbogast, Conroy, and Yurewitch conducted panther zone speed enforcement the day before Thanksgiving. The officers made several vehicle stops to address excessive speed violations. The drivers were educated about the importance of slowing down for panther conservation efforts. The speed limit is 60 mph during the day and 45 mph at night. The officers issued four citations and three warnings.

While on land patrol in the Picayune Strand State Forest, Officers Conroy and Yurewitch saw four all-terrain vehicles traveling off the designated roads and on the horse trails. The officers stopped the individuals and informed them that all-terrain vehicles are not allowed in the Picayune Stand State Forest. The operators were issued appropriate warnings and citations.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Conroy and Yurewitch responded to a deceased dolphin call. When they arrived, they saw a group gathering around an individual sitting on the ground. The officers saw that the person had abrasions and was disoriented. The officers requested EMS. The officers applied appropriate first aid techniques until EMS arrived. The victim was transported to the hospital.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Conroy and Yurewitch, along with other officers throughout the county assisted Florida Fish and Wildlife biologists in recovering a significant number of deceased dolphins. While at the scene, officers were able to answer questions by the public regarding the dolphins. They assured the public that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission biologists are working together with all county agencies and that necropsies will be performed on several dolphins to assist with determining the cause of death.