

FWC DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT FIELD OPERATIONS

**WEEKLY REPORT
October 9 - 15, 2009**

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

LIBERTY COUNTY

Officer Hank Forehand was working the opening day of dove season when he heard shots coming from a field in the Telogia area. He located the field and saw four hunters shooting dove. Officer Forehand waited for the hunters to exit the field and checked their bag limits of dove. An inspection of the field revealed that it had been baited with cracked corn and wheat. The four hunters were cited for hunting dove over a baited field.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Keith Clark stopped a commercial vessel in the Intracoastal Waterway near Perdido Key to conduct an inspection. The commercial fishing vessel had four occupants and commercial quantities of fish. During the inspection, Officer Clark discovered that no one onboard had a commercial saltwater products license with a restricted species endorsement. Additionally, a check of the vessel revealed it was not assigned a commercial license. Officer Clark discovered one of the occupants in possession of five greater amberjack fillets. Notice to appear citations were issued to the occupants of the vessel for not having a commercial saltwater products license while possessing commercial quantities of fish. A notice to appear citation for failure to land the amberjack in whole condition was issued to the individual who claimed responsibility for the fish. Officer Clark constructively seized the fish because of the time of night. Lieutenant Brian Lambert and Officer Andy Maltais responded to assist. A court order was obtained for the sale of the fish which weighed in at 180 pounds of red snapper, 360 pounds of vermillion snapper, 24 pounds of trigger fish and 7 pounds of scamp.

Officer Andy Maltais was on patrol of Perdido Key Wildlife Management Area when he located an all terrain vehicle (ATV) being operated within the management area. Officer Maltais issued a citation for unlawful operation within the management area.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Ben Pineda received a complaint from the FWC Communications Center about people catching and keeping over the bag limit of red drum on the Bob Sikes Fishing Pier. Officer Pineda arrived to find four individuals fishing together who were in possession of nine red drum. The daily bag limit for red drum is one fish per person. Officer Pineda issued each of the four a citation for over the bag limit of red drum.

Lieutenant Doug Berryman concluded an investigation into a cruelty to animals charge and obtained an arrest warrant for the suspect. On September 18, Lieutenant Berryman was called to the scene of a reported bear shooting; however, an investigation determined that a black Labrador retriever had been shot, not a bear. During the investigation, the owner/shooter of the dog was identified and admitted to

shooting his dog. On September 20, the dog was located and caught by Santa Rosa Animal Control and had to be destroyed due to her injuries.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Matt Webb was on water patrol in Destin Pass conducting fisheries inspections. At approximately 5:00 p.m., Officer Webb stopped a Tennessee registered vessel to do a fishery inspection. Upon inspection of the catch, the vessel operator was found in possession of five king mackerel, two of which were undersize. Officer Webb cited the man for possession of undersize king mackerel and issued a warning for possession of over the bag limit.

Officer Matt Webb was on water patrol in the Destin Harbor conducting fisheries inspections when he stopped a vessel and found the subject to be in possession of two undersize spotted sea trout. Officer Webb seized the fish and issued a citation for possession of undersize spotted sea trout.

Officers Alan Kirchinger and Van Barrow responded to an overturned canoe in the Blackwater River near Bryant Bridge. The Blackwater River level is up due to recent torrential rainfall. The officers launched a boat at Bryant Bridge and headed downriver. They located the first subject, a 64-year-old female in the water, hanging on to a log. When they got her into the boat, she advised that her friend floated downstream and was last seen about an hour earlier. Officers Barrow and Kirchinger headed downstream and located the second subject, a 50-year-old female, clinging to a log. With both subjects successfully rescued, Officers Barrow and Kirchinger returned to the boat ramp at Bryant Bridge where Emergency Medical Services (EMS) checked them out and released them.

OKALOOSA COUNTY COPS

Officer Van Barrow taught the law portion of the hunter education class to a group at the Okaloosa County Extension office.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

DUVAL COUNTY

Officer Adam Small was patrolling the Heckscher Drive area around Haulover Creek when he observed three individuals fishing from the creek bank. He approached the men and asked if they had any luck fishing. During the conversation he noticed that one of the men was being evasive and acted like he was trying to hide something. Officer Small ran a warrant check on the individuals and found that the man who was being evasive had a warrant out of St. Johns County. The defendant was arrested and taken to the Duval County Jail.

During the Columbus Day weekend, Officers Hope McGregor, Jamey Stowell, Bob Brienza, Roland Green and Aaron O'Reilly participated in a joint manatee protection detail in the St. Johns River. The officers worked with agents from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The goal of the detail was to bring awareness to the state and federal manatee zones that are in the St. Johns River and surrounding tributaries. Several state and federal citations were issued for violating the manatee zones.

NASSAU COUNTY

Officers Jill Izsak and Sandy Blackburn were conducting license and fisheries inspections at the south end of Amelia Island State Park on the George Crady Bridge. Both officers observed a man with a cooler, a few buckets and a cast net walking towards the parking lot. They approached the subject and inspected his cooler which revealed 85 mullet. The man claimed he knew nothing of the regulations for mullet but quoted a few other fish regulations of which he was aware. Appropriate citations were issued.

NORTHEAST REGION

BREVARD COUNTY

Officers Bryan Lee and Dusty Humphrey were on land patrol near the Beacon 42 boat ramp on Mosquito Lagoon. Several men were observed cast netting numerous fish while wading on the lagoon. With the assistance of a local fisherman, the officers made their way out to the subjects. A total of 13 misdemeanor resource violations were discovered among five of the fishermen. Citations were issued for undersize redfish, undersize sea trout, undersize sheepshead, undersize mangrove snapper, and undersize clams.

BREVARD COUNTY COPS

Officer Chase Platt attended a Family Fun Day event at the Police Hall of Fame in Titusville. He set up a static display of his FWC vehicle and airboat and spoke with many visitors. There were approximately 3,000 visitors in attendance.

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Officers Cody Loeffler and Damon Saunders responded to a call regarding a skydiver who fell somewhere around the Sebastian River. The officers were already in the process of launching their patrol boat at a nearby ramp when they received the call. They arrived at the scene within minutes and located the skydiver on the Sebastian River Buffer Preserve on the other side of the river. He was not injured and had missed his mark by about a mile. He was stranded there for more than an hour before anyone noticed he was gone.

OSCEOLA COUNTY

After learning an Osceola County man failed to respond to a non-criminal citation he had been issued, Lieutenant Guy Carpenter II received a warrant for his arrest.

While on patrol, Officer Caitlyn Staskiewicz and Reserve Officer Zach Ricciuti received information from Officer Corey Bidwell that he had an arrest warrant for an Osceola County man who had left the scene of a boat accident which occurred in Brevard County. The officers located the subject at his place of work and arrested him for the warrant.

Later on in their patrol, Officers Staskiewicz and Ricciuti checked two men fishing on Shingle Creek. During their inspection, one man was found in possession of a cannabis pipe. He was issued a notice to appear for the violation.

Officer Staskiewicz received a favorable disposition on a double dipping bag limit case she made earlier this year. After having a non-jury trial, the Pinellas County man was adjudicated guilty and received a \$200 fine, plus court costs.

While on patrol in Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area, Officers Justin Morgan and Kurt Arendas found a truck outside the area, parked along the fence. After two hours of surveillance, they observed a man exit the woods carrying a bow and crossing over the fence. Upon making contact with the subject, Officer Morgan learned he was very aware of the regulation stating hunters must enter and exit only through designated entrances. The man was issued a notice to appear for the violation.

SOUTHWEST REGION

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Officer Dirk Williamson was on water patrol in B Pool of the Kissimmee River when he encountered several occupants onboard different boats cast netting nongame fish. One subject was engaged in commercial fishing, without a commercial fishing license and was issued a notice to appear in court. In another boat, a fisherman had an outstanding warrant from Brevard County for failing to appear in court. He was transported to the Highlands County Jail.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Officer William Holcomb was on patrol in the area of Friendship Trail (old Gandy Bridge) when he observed an individual trespassing. He conducted a fisheries inspection and found the subject in possession of nine mangrove snapper. The individual was charged with trespassing and over the bag limit of mangrove snapper.

Officers George Wells and Jon Saltzgaver have been working derelict vessels in Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough Counties. The officers have conducted numerous

derelict vessel investigations that have resulted in criminal charges being filed with the State Attorney's Office. Two derelict vessel investigations that have been ongoing since April have recently been completed. The officers gave the owners of the two vessels numerous attempts to remove the vessels from state waters, however the vessels still remain and felony charges have been filed with the Pinellas County State Attorney's Office.

LEE COUNTY

Officers Andy Brown and Matt Griffith were conducting a fisheries inspection on two anglers at Big Carlos Pass in Bonita Springs. One individual could not provide a valid fishing license or any form of identification. Upon further investigation, Officers Brown and Griffith discovered that the individual was gang affiliated and had a total of 12 active arrest warrants from Lee County. The individual was issued a written warning for failure to possess a saltwater fishing license and was arrested for the warrants. In addition, he was charged with giving false information to a law enforcement officer. The subject was booked into the Lee County Jail.

Officers responded to an alligator incident involving a five-foot alligator that had attacked and consumed a small Yorkshire terrier in Bonita Springs. The alligator was removed from the area by FWC agent alligator trappers.

Officers Brian Cazalot and Justin Koble were on water patrol near Bunche Beach conducting fisheries inspections. As the officers approached a vessel, an individual onboard began tossing fish into the water. The officers boarded the vessel and found the individual in possession of nine undersize spotted sea trout. The individual was issued a citation for over the bag limit of sea trout and for possession of undersize fish. The fish were donated to a local wildlife foundation.

SARASOTA COUNTY

Officer Adam Brown observed two men trespassing on the fender system of the Blackburn Point Bridge and saw them catch a snook and conceal it in the trunk of their car. When the officer approached the men to conduct a fisheries inspection, they became uncooperative and denied catching any fish. After Officer Brown informed them that he had been watching them, the individuals admitted to catching eight snook and said that they were aware they were over the bag limit and knew they had only one snook of legal size. The individuals were arrested for over the bag limit of snook and the possession of undersize snook and received warnings for trespassing on the bridge fender system. The fish were seized and donated to Venice Wildlife Rescue.

SOUTH REGION A

BROWARD COUNTY

Officer Darral Thomason saw a subject shooting his muzzleloader from a levee. The subject was stopped and cited for displaying a gun in a manner that could take wildlife.

Officer Robert Kuester conducted a fisheries inspection on a vessel at Pioneer Park ramp. The inspection revealed nine undersize yellowtail snapper hidden in a chum bag in the bow of the vessel. The subject was cited.

Officer Bill Carpenter was called to help a subject who was locked in behind the gate at Stormwater Treatment Area 2. When Officer Carpenter arrived, he saw that the two subjects had been fishing in the area. An examination of their catch revealed oversize and over the limit (43 bass). The subjects were cited for the violations.

COPS

Reserve Officer Rudy Gabor participated in the annual national Cub Scout gathering at Plantation's Heritage Park. Approximately 1,000 cub scouts and their supporters attended the event. Officer Gabor displayed a marked patrol vehicle and airboat. He also distributed FWC brochures, bracelets, junior badges, and answered mission related questions.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Jamie young cited a subject who had speared an undersized mutton snapper in Jupiter Inlet.

Lieutenant Chuck Russo and Officers Jeff Haynes, Luis Rodriguez, Jamie Young, and Travis Basford worked an enforcement detail in the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area. Three FWC buggies as well as the FWC helicopter were used to patrol the remote area and look for hunting violations. One citation was issued to the operator of a vehicle travelling on the L-8 levee.

SOUTH REGION B

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Greg Stastny and Jason Tidwell assisted Marine Mammal Rescue in engineering the rescue of a wounded manatee near Shell Island. The manatee was captured and transported to St. Petersburg.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

At sunset on October 11, Officers Mike Albert and Donnie McKee were on water patrol when they spotted a disabled personal watercraft (PWC) with two subjects on board in the open waters of Biscayne Bay. The officers took the PWC under tow and radioed the communications center of their intentions and the identity of the two subjects. The

officers were informed that one of the subjects had an active Port St. Lucie arrest warrant. Once the officers arrived at the marina, the subject was arrested and turned over to local police for transport to jail.

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Rene Taboas and Wade Hefner assisted with a search and rescue for three subjects on board an aircraft that crashed in the Gulf of Mexico. As the small fixed wing craft approached Marathon from Tampa, the engine failed. The pilot transmitted distress signals while he, his daughter, and son-in-law prepared for an emergency crash landing. They sustained minor injuries, but were able to safely exit the craft just before it sank. The three survivors lashed life jackets and trap buoys together to stay afloat and were located twelve hours later by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Lieutenant Ed Maldonado and Officers David Graham and Steve Golden issued four federal citations to several subjects for illegally spear fishing within the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the Alligator Reef Sanctuary Protection Area. The fishermen also received three citations for possession of nine undersize hogfish and one undersize red grouper. One subject was additionally cited for interference after discarding a speared lobster.

Later in the week, the officers issued citations to several more subjects for illegally spear fishing in the Upper Keys near Turtle Rocks. In addition, the subjects received citations for possession of fourteen over the limit of hogfish.

Officer Joshua Greenier arrested a subject for possessing four stone crab traps that belonged to another person. Two of the four traps were licensed to a person who coincidentally was recently convicted on charges of trap theft.