



South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

News Release

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Federal Fishery Council Recognizes Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission's Lieutenant Bryan Lee receives annual award



Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission's Lieutenant Bryan Lee accepts the award for Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.

Members of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council awarded its annual Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award to Lieutenant Bryan Lee during the Council's meeting this week in Charleston, South Carolina. The annual award recognizes distinctive service, professionalism, and dedication to enforcing fisheries regulations in the South Atlantic. Lieutenant Bryan Lee is the Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) Supervisor for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FL FWCC), Northeast Region including the OPV SEA HAWK in Port Canaveral and the OPV OSPREY in Ponce Inlet, Florida. Lieutenant Lee also serves as the FL FWC Northeast Region joint enforcement agreement (JEA) liaison with the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement Port Orange Field.

"By bringing together the expertise of the Offshore Patrol Vessel Squad to help conserve and protect our state and federal marine resources, Lieutenant Lee has demonstrated the importance of leadership and commitment to law enforcement and the role it plays in effective fisheries management" said Council Chair Charlie Phillips. "So, on behalf of the

Council, we'd like to congratulate Lieutenant Lee as the recipient of this year's award."

The Northeast Region (OPV) Squad was created in the summer of 2014 combining the crews and assets of two field offices. In the past year, under the leadership of Lieutenant Lee, the Northeast Region OPV Squad has successfully made more cases and worked more JEA hours than any single OPV could have accomplished as a single unit. This innovative approach of consolidating crew and assets has translated into cost savings for the unit through lowering maintenance costs and maximizing the amount of funds available for patrol. Lieutenant Lee's team approach was a major contributor to this success.

Lieutenant Lee and his team are universally known as subject matter experts on a range of topics related to offshore fisheries and the JEA. They have shared their collective expertise with stakeholders across the state through teaching formal classes at the FL FWCC training academy and the University of Florida on topics ranging from federal case packages to turtle excluder device and net measurement. Lieutenant Lee and crew members also routinely provide community outreach programs at various events at school career days and dive and fishing clubs, and recruit ride along evaluations.

In addition to his leadership coordinating outreach and training programs, Lieutenant Lee and his squad's list of cases are extensive and diverse. Over the past year, the Northeast OPV team filed 27 federal cases with NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement for federal prosecution. Lt. Lee's team also issued 8 state resource citations and 45 resource warnings during OPV boardings while offshore in Federal waters.

Lieutenant Lee and his team have been the recipients of several awards recognizing their successes and achievements in law enforcement. Lieutenant Lee and the Northeast Region OPV Squad were awarded the 2016 FL FWCC Team of the Year Award. In 2015, Lieutenant Lee received a Certificate of Appreciation from NOAA Office of Law Enforcement in recognition of his superior performance of duty under the JEA.

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“NOAA Office of Law Enforcement is extremely pleased that Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s Lieutenant Bryan Lee is this year’s recipient for the SAFMC Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award” said Jeff Radonski, Supervisory Criminal Investigator/Assistant Special Agent in Charge with NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, Southeast Enforcement Division. “Through his leadership, Bryan has developed a team of dedicated officers that patrol the waters off of Florida to enforce the regulations developed through the Council. His team’s success is not measured in the number of cases, but rather through the service they provide in protecting and conserving our nation’s living marine resources for the public.”

“It’s my privilege to accept this award on behalf of my squad” said Lieutenant Lee. “It is their hard work and dedication that allowed us to achieve such impressive results. Each of us is fully committed and dedicated to the protection of our marine resources.”

The Council initiated the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award in 2010. Nominees may be submitted from each of the southeastern state law enforcement agencies, the U.S. Coast Guard, and NOAA Fisheries.

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, one of eight regional councils, conserves and manages fish stocks from three to 200 miles offshore of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and east Florida.