

Boaters dumping trash in South Florida's waters? Teens face felony charges

May 6 2024, by Michelle Marchante, Miami Herald



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Two teen boaters are facing felony charges for pollution after they were caught on video dumping trash into the Atlantic Ocean during a South Florida boating party.

The 16-year-old and 15-year-old boys from Palm Beach County were arrested Friday about a week after a drone video of the [illegal dumping](#) went viral online, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife

Conservation Commission. Miami Herald news partner CBS News Miami is reporting that the teens turned themselves in.

The Miami Herald is not naming the teenagers because they are minors.

Both teens were arrested on a third degree felony charge for causing pollution "so as to harm or injure [human health](#) or welfare, animal, plant or [aquatic life](#) or property," according to their arrest reports, which the Herald obtained through a public record request. This charge comes with a fine of up to \$50,000 or up to 5 years in jail, or both.

Dumped into the water: [plastic water bottles](#), cans, food bags, plastic cups and other trash, according to the arrest reports. The illegal dumping happened in the waters just offshore of Boca Raton on April 28, not far from Boca Bash, a large gathering of partygoers on boats in Boca Lake. Wavy Boats, a boat filming company that recorded the footage, wrote on Instagram that the teens dumped the garbage while leaving Boca Bash.

One teen is seen "holding the basket over his head pumping the basket up and down as if he was celebrating the dumping of the trash into the water," Officer Luis Merizo wrote in the report. The viral video sparked outrage in the community, including from Boca Bash organizers.

"We cannot be more angered and disturbed by these actions ... By no means do we believe this is a representation of the gathering," Boca Bash wrote on Facebook.

"We implore and expect boaters to keep the waterways clean, uphold proper boating etiquette, and follow state laws while on the water. ... It is shameful to see local boaters from surrounding cities have little to no respect for our [local wildlife](#) and marine ecosystems. We do not condone this behavior by any means. ... We hope the repercussions handed down can be viewed publicly as a warning of how important our waters are to

us native Floridians."

FWC Chairman Rodney Barreto also reiterated in a statement that illegal dumping of trash in Florida's waters is a "serious crime" and that "callous disregard for Florida's environment will not be tolerated."

"This is a teaching moment for all those involved—Florida's natural resources are precious, and we should all do our part to protect them," Barreto said.

2024 Miami Herald. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Boaters dumping trash in South Florida's waters? Teens face felony charges (2024, May 6) retrieved 11 July 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2024-05-boaters-dumping-trash-south-florida.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.