



**Specialty License Plate Audit**  
**Guy Harvey Ocean Fund, Inc.**  
**Protect Our Oceans**  
Audit Report 201415-11

October 29, 2014

## **Executive Summary**

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The purpose of this audit was to determine compliance with applicable laws, policies, and regulations related to the annual affidavit prepared by the Guy Harvey Ocean Fund, Inc. (Foundation) for the Protect Our Oceans (formerly Catch Me, Release Me) specialty license plate. The Foundation is required to submit a Specialty License Plate Revenue, Expenditure, and Compliance Affidavit to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (Department) within nine months after the end of the Foundation's fiscal year. The affidavit submitted by the Foundation, for the 2013 Fiscal Year ended December 31, 2013, was used for this audit.

For every Protect Our Oceans specialty license plate sold or renewed, a \$25 annual use fee is charged and distributed, as required by statute, to the Foundation, a non-profit organization established to provide resources to encourage research and education concerning the commercial and recreational fishing industries conservation and best management practices for sustainable marine environments. Section 320.08058(76), Florida Statutes (F.S.), specifies that a maximum of 10 percent of the proceeds from the sale of plates may be used for administrative and marketing costs. The remaining funds shall be used to fund marine-related scientific research, including research of free-ranging pelagic marine species that inhabit, use, or migrate through Florida waters; conservation initiatives; and education and public outreach programs targeting school-aged children in the state.

During our audit, we determined the Foundation generally complied with applicable laws, policies, and regulations related to the annual affidavit.

## Background and Introduction

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Specialty license plates are license plates available to the general public with unique designs that promote philanthropic and other causes and require payment of an additional annual use fee. Section 320.08056, F.S., authorizes the issuance of all specialty license plates and specifies the annual use fee for the more than 120 specialty license plates Florida offers.

Section 320.08062, F.S., grants the Department authority to examine all records relating to the use of specialty license plate funds. The Office of Inspector General included the examination of specialty license plate recipient organizations in its annual work plan.

For every Protect Our Oceans specialty license plate sold or renewed, a \$25 annual use fee is charged and distributed, as required by statute, to the Foundation, a non-profit organization established to encourage research and education concerning the commercial and recreational fishing industries conservation and best management practices for sustainable marine environments. The name of the specialty license plate was changed from Catch Me, Release Me (as enacted in 2010) to Protect Our Oceans pursuant to a 2014 statutory amendment.

Section 320.08058(76), F.S., specifies that a maximum of 10 percent of the proceeds from the sale of plates may be used for administrative and marketing costs. The remaining funds shall be used to fund marine-related scientific research, including research of free-ranging pelagic marine species that inhabit, use, or migrate through Florida waters; conservation initiatives; and education and public outreach programs targeting school-aged children in the state

The Foundation reported receipts of \$135,866.07 in specialty license plate fees for the 2013 Fiscal Year.

We used the Foundation's 2013 affidavit and financial records for this audit.

## Results of Audit

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During our audit, we determined the Foundation generally complied with applicable laws, policies, and regulations related to the annual affidavit for the Protect Our Oceans specialty license plate.

## **Purpose, Scope, and Methodology**

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The purpose of this audit was to determine the Foundation's compliance with applicable laws, policies, and regulations related to the annual affidavit prepared by the Foundation for the Protect Our Oceans specialty license plate.

The scope of this audit included revenues and expenditures reported on the Foundation's affidavit for the 2013 Fiscal Year, and specialty license plate revenue and expenditures reported in the Foundation's financial records for the 2013 Fiscal Year.

The methodology included:

- Reviewing Florida Statutes related to specialty license plate fees;
- Reviewing Department policies and procedures related to specialty license plate fees;
- Reviewing the Foundation's policies and procedures related to the use of specialty license plate fees;
- Reconciling the Department distribution of annual use fees to revenues reported on the affidavit filed by the Foundation;
- Reconciling the expenditures reported on the affidavit to the Foundation's financial records;
- Reviewing the use of funds by the Foundation to ensure there is adequate supporting documentation, and that the expenditures are for purposes authorized by statute;
- Reviewing timing, availability, and content of reports such as affidavits, single audits, or subrecipient monitoring; and
- Comparing expenditures related to distributions and annual allocation limits for compliance with Section 320.08058(76), F.S., and reviewing reasonableness of balances.

## Distribution, Statement of Accordance, and Project Team

### Distribution

Terry L. Rhodes, Executive Director  
Diana Vaughn, Deputy Executive Director  
Leslie Palmer, Chief of Staff  
Boyd Walden, Director of Motorist Services  
Steven Fielder, Deputy Director of Motorist Services  
Julie Baker, Bureau Chief of Issuance Oversight

Steve Stock, President, Guy Harvey Ocean Fund, Inc.  
Tony Fins, Executive Director, Guy Harvey Ocean Fund, Inc.  
Andrew Daniels, Treasurer, Guy Harvey Ocean Fund, Inc.

Melinda M. Miguel, Chief Inspector General  
David W. Martin, Auditor General

### Statement of Accordance

Section 20.055, Florida Statutes, requires the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles' Inspector General to review, evaluate, and report on policies, plans, procedures, accounting, financial, and other operations of the Department and to recommend improvements. This audit engagement was conducted in accordance with applicable *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* published by the Institute of Internal Auditors and *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General* published by the Association of Inspectors General.

### Project Team

Engagement conducted by:  
Cindy Fernald, Auditor

Under the supervision of:  
David Ulewicz, Audit Director

Approved by:

  
Julie M. Leftheris, Inspector General