DANGER ON THE WATER

SHELLY GUBEREK/FOR THE HERALD

TRAFFIC JAM: Boats crowd the entrance to Port Everglades Monday afternoon. Broward County surpassed the Florida Keys in reporting the most boating accidents last year. The good news is no boater was killed in Broward THe county still had two fewer accidents on the water than in 1999.

Broward tops state in boating mishaps

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Broward County led Florida with the most reported boating accidents in 2000, replacing Monroe County as the front-runner in the dubious category, according to statistics released by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Broward recorded 147 accidents with 41,900 registered vessels. Monroe reported 145 accidents with 26,690 registered vessels. Monroe had five fatalities. Broward had none.

Capt. Paul Ouellette, boating safety coordinator for the conservation commission, said the agency doesn't consider the rate of accidents per 1,000 registered vessels when compiling the list. At one time, the agency used that measuring stick but no longer does so.

He agreed the raw numbers show a higher likelihood of being in a boating accident in the Florida Keys — but visiting boaters also need to be considered.

"The math tells you that," he said. "There are reasons, such as geography and more weekend and