

Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report
August 25-31, 2013

This report is a broad sampling of events that have taken place in the past week, but does not include all actions taken by the Law Enforcement Division.



Region I- Calhoun (Northwest)

BARTOW COUNTY

On August 31st, Cpl. Byron Young and RFC Zack Hardy patrolled Allatoona Lake. The officers stopped several vessels operating with improper lights and PFD (lifejacket) violations.

CHEROKEE COUNTY

On August 28th, Cpl. Lee Burns and RFC Barton Hendrix assisted the Governor's Drug Task Force with the removal of marijuana being illegally grown in Cherokee County.



One of the several marijuana grow operations located in Cherokee County

Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)

STEPHENS COUNTY

On August 31st, Cpl. Bill Bunch responded a complaint on the Lake Russell WMA. Upon arrival he found six subjects riding an ATV and a jeep in a wildlife opening. Some of the subjects were also in possession of alcohol and were minors. A total of nine citations were written for underage possession of alcohol and driving in a food plot.

HART COUNTY

On August 29th, RFC Brandon Pierce presented an Information and Education Program for the employees of the City of Hartwell. New boating laws and hunting safety tips were discussed. A total of thirty people attended the program.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

On August 31st, RFC Brandon Pierce, Sgt. Stan Elrod, RFC Tim Vickery, and RFC Shane Sartor conducted a HIN inspection at the Tugaloo State Park Mega Ramp for boats with registration issues. A total of thirty-five boats were inspected and were cleared of all boat registration issues.

On August 31st, Sgt. Stan Elrod and RFC Shane Sartor patrolled for boating safety on Lake Hartwell with several boats checked. One citation was issued for towing skier between sunset and sunrise and one warning for operating vessel with improper light.

HARTWELL LAKE

On August 31st, RFC Brandon Pierce and RFC Tim Vickery patrolled the lake for any boating safety/fishing activity. Numerous boats were checked for proper safety equipment. A total of four citations and warnings were issued. The violations consisted of operating a PWC during hours of darkness, failure to obey regulatory marker, operating a vessel without a throwable device, and operating a vessel within a 100 foot of object/shore above idle speed.

HALL COUNTY

On August 25th, RFC Kevin Goss responded to a boat incident at Little River Park in Hall County on Lake Lanier. Ranger Goss then went to North East Georgia Medical Center and took statements from all involved.

On August 31st, RFC Kevin Goss while on patrol with RFC Eric Isom stopped a vessel in the Chattahoochee River because a passenger was riding the gunwale. After conducting a safety inspection and administering field sobriety Ranger Goss placed the female under arrest for BUI.

On August 31st, at approximately 2030 hours RFC Mark Stephens and Sgt. Mike Burgamy were patrolling Hall County near Cocktail Cove. The officers observed a vessel being operated without any bow lights on. Officer Stephens stopped the vessel. Officer Stephens arrested the individual for Boating under the influence of alcohol and for Operating a vessel with improper navigation lights.

On August 25th, at approximately 1935 hours RFC Mark Stephens and Cpl. Adam Loudermilk were patrolling Hall County near Aqualand Marina. The officers observed an individual operating a vessel just outside the “No Wake Zone” at Aqualand Marina. The individual violated the “No Wake Zone”. Officer Stephens arrested the individual for boating under the influence of alcohol, operating a vessel with insufficient PFD’s, and for failing to obey a regulatory marker.

On September 1st, RFC Mark Stephens and RFC Eric Isom were on vessel patrol on Lake Lanier in Big Creek near Burton Mill Park. The Officers noticed a suspicious person sitting on the bank. When the subject saw the officers; he quickly tried to conceal an object in a black bag next to him. RFC Isom went to talk to the subject and noticed a glass pipe commonly used to smoke marijuana in the bag. RFC Isom secured the glass pipe and the subject. A search of the bag revealed a second glass pipe, scales, grinder, rolling papers, a marijuana cigarette, and a clear bag containing marijuana. The subject was transported to the Hall County Detention Center to post bond.

DAWSON COUNTY

On August 27th, RFC Barry Britt and Ranger Shane Brown conducted an Online Hunter Education Class and a total of 20 students were certified.

FORSYTH COUNTY

On August 26th, RFC Barry Britt and Ranger Shane Brown conducted an Online Hunter Education Class and a total of 60 students were certified.

On August 31st RFC Barry Britt and Gwinnett County Police Dept. Officer Brandon Townley patrolled Lake Lanier. They checked several boats and charged one 50 year old male subject with boating under the influence after he was stopped for improperly displayed registration numbers.

On August 31st, Cpl. Eric Sanders and Cpl. Jason Roberson patrolled Lake Lanier for boating and fishing violations. The rangers issued written warnings for operating a vessel without the registration numbers displayed properly and or operating a PWC without wearing a PFD.

GWINNETT COUNTY

On August 29th, Captain Thomas Barnard, Sgt. Lee Brown, Cpl. Eric Sanders and Ranger Shane Brown along with DNR CIRT Team members RFC Anne Alexander and RFC Tim Butler responded to a fatality boating incident on the Chattahoochee River at Medlock Bridge Boat Ramp. Two subjects were fishing and hit a tree that was in the river and one of the subjects fell into the river. The subject that fell out of the boat was located by the Johns Creek Fire Department and Gwinnett County Fire Department Swift Water Teams.

On August 31st, Cpl. Eric Sanders was patrolling the Chattahoochee River at Abbots Bridge Boar Ramp. Cpl. Sanders found a large amount of trash that had been dumped. Cpl. Sanders was assisted by the National Park Service Law Enforcement Officers. The rangers were able to track down who dumped the trash. The case has been turned over to the National Park Service for prosecution.

HALL COUNTY

On August 31st, Sgt. Lee Brown and RFC Mitchell Crump patrolled Lake Lanier for boating and fishing violations. The rangers issued written warnings for allowing an underage person to operating a PWC, operating a vessel without the registration numbers displayed, operating a vessel with improper lights and operating a vessel without a fire extinguisher.

Region III- Thomson (East Central)

LINCOLN COUNTY

On August 26th, Cpl. Ryan Swain conducted a Hunter Education Course at the Lincolnton Clubhouse. Two subjects were certified in Hunter Education.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

On August 28th and 30th Cpl. Ryan Swain and RFC Brian Adams performed television interviews with News 6 and 26. During the interviews, boating safety concerns were discussed due to the upcoming Labor Day Weekend.

On September 1st, Sgt. Doyte Chaffin and RFC Robert Timmerman apprehended two subjects who were shocking fish on the Savannah River. The two subjects were cited for shocking fish and possession of illegally taken wildlife. Sixty bream were confiscated for evidence along with the shocking device.



WILKES COUNTY

On August 30th Sgt. Brian Carter, Cpl. Julian Wilkins, and Cpl. Mark Patterson responded to a landowner complaint of possible hunting without permission. The incident is still under investigation.

OGLETHORPE COUNTY

On August 31st Sgt. Brian Carter and RFC Phillip Nelson received a request from a landowner to inspect a dove field. The Rangers determined that the field had been prepared in a manner that would make it illegal for dove hunting. The landowner was advised of their findings.

ELBERT COUNTY

On August 31st Cpl. Julian Wilkins and Cpl. Mark Patterson conducted a vessel patrol of Lake Russell. Violations addressed during the patrol were fishing without a license and operating a vessel with improper registration.

LAKE OCONEE

Over the Labor Day weekend, Sgt. John Harwell, Cpl. Derrell Worth, RFC Richard Tanner, RFC Tim Butler, RFC Ricky Boles and RFC Niki Spencer patrolled Lake Oconee for boat and safety violations. Individuals were cited for: operating a vessel under the influence, operating a vessel with improper lights, towing a skier without an observer, allowing an underage child to ride in a moving vessel without wearing a PFD, and failure to obey regulatory marker.

RICHMOND COUNTY

August 31, Cpl. Ben Payne received a call from a deputy of a possible missing boater on the Savannah River. Cpl. Payne responded and spoke with Richmond County Fire Dept. personnel. They were actively searching the canal road and the river. Cpl. Payne performed a ground search on foot along the shoreline. Once rescue personnel had searched all possible areas, Cpl. Payne called in his work section to help with the search. An extensive search ensued. The Georgia State Patrol was called and a helicopter with a FLIR device came to help search into the night. The following morning the Rangers and Firefighters resumed their search by land and water. At 9:30 A.M. rescuers located the body of Ralph Taylor on the bottom of the Savannah River. He was not wearing a life jacket.



Region IV- Macon (West Central)

BALDWIN COUNTY

On August 31st, Cpl. Josh Copelan and Ranger Matt Johnson were on routine patrol near Airport Island on Lake Sinclair, when they noticed a vessel operating after hours without a stern light. Upon further investigation, the operator was arrested for boating under the influence and later turned over the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office for processing.

BIBB COUNTY

On August 19th, after a brief investigation, Sgt. Tony Fox located a vessel that had been reported stolen out of the state of Florida in 2010. The vessel was seized and turned over to local authorities for further investigation.

CLAYTON/HENRY COUNTIES

On Thursday, August 29th, RFC Kevin Godbee and Wildlife Biologist Charlie Killmaster inspected several commercially licensed wildlife exhibition facilities in Clayton and Henry Counties. No violations were found.

COWETA COUNTY

On Saturday, August 31st, Cpl. Travis Sweat and Sgt. Brent Railey patrolled Chattahoochee Bend State Park and the Chattahoochee River from the park to McIntosh Reserve and the patrolled the Hwy 16 boat ramp. They checked two boats.

MERIWETHER/COWETA COUNTIES

On Thursday, August 29th, Cpl. Keith Waddell and Wildlife Biologist Theron Menken checked several commercially licensed wildlife exhibition facilities in Coweta and Meriwether Counties. No violations were found.

PUTNAM COUNTY

On August 31st, Cpl. Lynn Stanford and Ranger Derek Cobb were on routine boating patrol on Lake Sinclair near Oconee Springs when they noticed a vessel operating after hours without a bow light. After further investigation, the operator was arrested for boating under the influence and later turned over to the Putnam County Sheriff's Office for processing.

TAYLOR COUNTY

On Saturday, August 31st, Cpl. Josh Swain and Ranger David Fisher taught a hunter education course. There were approximately 30 kids in attendance preparing for the upcoming hunting season.

TROUP COUNTY

On the afternoon of August 31st, Ranger First Class Russell Epps and Sgt. Jim Bradfield were on vessel patrol on West Point Lake when they stopped a vessel for no visible registration. During an inspection of the vessel for proper safety equipment, RFC Epps observed what appeared to be a mixed drink in the operator's area. The operator admitted to having a few drinks during the day. Upon further investigation the operator was charged with operating a vessel under the influence and transported to the Troup County Sheriff's Office.

Region V- Albany (Southwest)

WORTH/LEE/DOUGHERTY-FLINT RIVER



Corporal Robbie Griner operating a small patrol boat on the Flint River

On August 30th, Cpl.'s Greg Wade and Robbie Griner patrolled the Flint River from the Lake Blackshear to Lake Worth. The Rangers covered 30 miles of river and checked several boaters and fishermen. Several citations were issued during this patrol for various boating and fishing violations.

BAKER COUNTY

On August 27th, Cpl. Randy Davis and Ranger Steve Thomas assisted the Baker County Sheriff's Office in locating a missing person with mental disabilities. Cpl. Davis tracked the individual through fields and heavily wooded areas before she returned to Hwy 37, where she was met by Ranger Thomas and a Deputy. The female was transported to the hospital for a mental health evaluation.

DECATUR COUNTY

On August 31st, Sgt. Rick Sellars encountered a subject driving a vehicle erratically on Hwy 253. A stop was conducted and the female operator was found to be under the influence. The case was turned over to Georgia State Patrol who charged the operator with driving under the influence.

Region VI- Metter (Southeast)

LAURENS COUNTY

On August 25th, Cpl. Stiles received a call from Laurens County Sheriff's Office reporting a large injured bird along a roadway. Cpl. Stiles responded and located an injured wood stork, but was unable to capture the bird without assistance. Region VI Game Management Supervisor Chris Bauman captured the injured bird with assistance from Cpl. Stiles and RFC Rodney Horne. The injured wood stork was delivered to a wildlife rehabilitator for assessment and treatment.

On August 31st, Sgt. David Reckley, Cpl. John A. Stokes, Cpl. Dan Stiles, RFC Allen Mills, and RFC Rodney Horne conducted vessel patrols on the Oconee River. Eight vessels were checked for boating safety equipment / registration and four fishing licenses were checked. Violations were documented for operating a vessel without fire extinguisher, operating a vessel without registration, and fishing without a license. Verbal guidance was given for three minor violations. During the vessel patrol Cpl. John Stokes and RFC Rodney Horne arrested one subject wanted in Laurens County for probation violations. The subject was transported to the nearest boat landing and turned over to Laurens County deputies.

DODGE COUNTY

On Aug 30th, Cpl. John A. Stokes patrolled Dodge county PFA two violations were documented for fishing without a WMA license.

EFFINGHAM COUNTY

On August 25th, RFC Jamey O'Brien and CPL Eddie Akins checked Tuckasee King Landing for boating safety violations. A total of 8 vessels were checked resulting in no violations detected. Information regarding HIN inspections and boat registration was given to a couple of boaters.

On August 31st, RFC Jamey O'Brien and CPL Eddie Akins patrolled the Savannah River for boating safety violations. Five vessels were checked with no violations detected.

EVANS COUNTY

On August 25th, RFC Debbie Brannen and Sgt. Jon Barnard patrolled the Evans County Public Fishing Area. Several licenses were checked resulting in violations of fishing without licenses and fishing on a PFA without a WMA license.

On August 31st, RFC Debbie Brannen and RFC Clint Jarriel patrolled the Canoochee River. A total of 4 boats and 6 licenses were checked. One violation for allowing a child to ride in a vessel without wearing a PFD was documented.

Later that day, RFC Brannen checked landings and fishing areas along the Canoochee River. Violations for residents and non-residents fishing without licenses were documented.

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY

On August 31st, Cpl. Kevin Joyce responded to a stranded boater on the Ocmulgee River near Burkett's Ferry Landing. The boat and occupants were brought safely ashore. After an inspection of the vessel violations were documented for an unserviceable fire extinguisher and fishing without a license.

ECHOLS COUNTY

On August 23rd, Sgt. Patrick Dupree, Cpl. Jason Shipes, RFC Mark Pool, and Ranger Daniel North assisted the Echols County Sheriff's Department with serving a search warrant related to dog fighting. Several pieces of equipment used in training pit bulldogs were seized in addition to nine dogs. Two individuals at the residence were arrested for dog fighting-related activity.

On August 28th, Sgt. Patrick Dupree and Ranger Daniel North were conducting an ATV patrol in the Needmore area when an individual was observed transporting a deer carcass in the back of his truck. A brief investigation revealed that the driver and another individual had shot the small buck along GA Hwy. 94 two nights prior at 1:00 AM. Violations of hunting deer at night and possession of illegally taken wildlife were documented on both subjects. The buck's rack and quartered meat was seized.

On August 30th, Sgt. Patrick Dupree and Ranger Daniel North were working a night deer hunting complaint on GA Hwy. 94 near Tom's Creek when Sgt. Dupree observed a vehicle approach and slow to a stop on the highway. Two rifle shots were fired from the vehicle. Sgt. Dupree conducted a stop of the vehicle. The vehicle's occupant was charged with driving under the influence, hunting deer at night, hunting big game from a public road and hunting from a vehicle. Before stopping, the individual had thrown his rifle out of his vehicle. The damaged rifle was located. The suspect stated that he did not hit the doe deer he shot at and no deer was located. The violator was arrested and transported to jail.



The rifle that was thrown by the poacher from his vehicle in Echols County

WARE COUNTY

On August 24th, Sgt. Patrick Dupree, Cpl. Jason Shipes, RFC Mark Pool, and Ranger Sam Williams assisted Laura S. Walker State Park staff with the annual Triathlon. The officers manned a rescue vessel during the swimming event and assisted with public access control for the running event.

On August 27th, Corporal Josh Chambers patrolled Laura S. Walker State Park Lake. From the boat ramp Corporal Chambers could see a boat towing a skier that was not wearing a PFD. Corporal Chambers made contact with the boat and issued a citation to the operator for towing a skier without a PFD.

CHARLTON COUNTY

On August 26th, Major Ed Watkins with DNR's Aviation Unit provided RGR Sam Williams and RGR Daniel North a familiarization flight over the vast timberlands along the Okefenokee Swamp's eastern and southern edge. The officers gained a different and valuable perspective of the terrain.



Ranger Daniel North stands beside the helicopter as Major Ed Watkins prepares for the flight at Waycross Airport.

On August 29th, Ranger Sam Williams received a complaint from an individual in Folkston that his neighbor had recently dressed an alligator hide and head and had them outside his residence drying. Ranger Williams and Cpl. Josh Chambers responded to the residence. Upon arrival, the hide and head were observed outside the residence and two subjects were standing in the yard. The two subjects were interviewed and it was determined that they had received the alligator parts from an unknown subject on the St. Mary's River. Both subjects were issued citations for possession of alligator or parts thereof. Along with the hide and head, a bag of frozen meat and a front foot was also recovered and seized from the residence.



Alligator parts recovered by Ranger Sam Williams and Cpl. Josh Chambers from a residence in Charlton County.

Later that night, Ranger Sam Williams was working a night hunting complaint in the St. George area. At approximately 1:00 AM, a vehicle his location at a slow rate of speed. The vehicle traveled approximately a half-mile down the road and a firearm was discharged. Ranger Williams initiated a traffic stop on the vehicle. The passenger in the vehicle admitted to shooting at a deer standing in the ditch. The passenger received citations for hunting deer at night, hunting from a vehicle, and hunting big game from a public road. The driver was issued warnings for the same violations. The deer could not be located.

BACON COUNTY

On August 30th, RFC Mark Pool received an anonymous tip of a buck deer killed at night. After a short investigation, RFC Pool and Cpl. Jason Shipes issued charges to one individual for hunting deer at night, hunting from a vehicle, and hunting big game from a public road, and possession of illegally taken wildlife. In addition, one individual was arrested on a felony warrant out of Jeff Davis County due to the investigation.

COFFEE COUNTY

On August 31st, RFC Tim Hutto and RFC Keith McDonald patrolled the Ocmulgee River for boating and fishing related violations. One violation was documented for operating a vessel without a fire extinguisher.

On August 31st, Sgt. Damon Winters and RFC Joe Hilton checked landings along the Ocmulgee River for boating and fishing activity. While checking Rocky Hammock Landing on Flat Tub WMA Four people were found in possession of alcohol. One person was charged with consumption of alcoholic beverage on a WMA.

BERRIEN COUNTY

On August 31st, RFC Tim Hutto and K-9 Gauge patrolled Paradise PFA for after-hours fishing violations. Two subjects were observed drinking alcohol at one of the ponds and charged with illegal consumption of alcohol on a PFA.

Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)

BRYAN COUNTY

On Aug. 31st, Cpl. Jay Morgan and Ranger Jason Miller patrolled the Ogeechee River near Ft. McAllister. One boater was cited for towing a skier without an observer or mirror on board.

LIBERTY COUNTY

On Aug. 31st, RFC Jack Thain and Cpl. Phillip Scott patrolled the Medway River and St. Catherine's Sound area, citing one boater for not having enough life jackets on board.

GLYNN COUNTY

On August 25th, RFC David Brady was conducting a patrol on Paulk's Pasture WMA and encountered a male subject that was small game hunting from the management area road. After a brief investigation RFC Brady determined that the man was not only hunting from the road, but was a non-resident hunting with a resident hunting license. The man was cited for Hunting from a WMA road and Non-resident hunting with a resident license.

On August 31st, RFC David Brady and RFC John Evans conducted a salt water patrol in Glynn County. Throughout the day, RFC Evans and RFC Brady encountered numerous violations consisting of fishing without license, fishing while privileges were suspended, and possession of undersize fish. A total of eight fish were seized and the fishermen were cited for possession of undersize saltwater fish.

CAMDEN COUNTY

On August 30th, Cpl. Craig Smith and Ranger Colte Shaske responded to an overdue boater on Crooked River. Upon locating the overdue boater, the Rangers found the subject after he had been disabled in the water for four hours with no water or cover. Officers then towed the vessel to a dock

CHATHAM COUNTY

August 25th, Cpl. Chris Moore and Ranger Jordan Crawford patrolled the Herb River for crab fishing violations. The officers confiscated six commercial traps that were being fished illegally.



August 31st, Corporal Chris Moore and Sergeant Cindy Miller patrolled Ossabaw and Wassaw Sounds in Chatham County for commercial fishing activity. One commercial shrimp boat was boarded. The gear was inspected and found to be in compliance. The striker on board did not have a commercial fishing license in possession and was issued a citation.