

Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report
July 28 – August 3, 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 3rd, Cpl. Byron Young patrolled the Etowah River below Allatoona Lake. Cpl. Young checked 49 vessels/ canoes / kayaks, 27 tubers, and 6 fishing licenses. The DNR officer located 2 people fishing without a license and several tubers without Personal Flotation Devices (PFD's – "life jackets"). Cpl. Young gave verbal guidance for most of the violations and handed out 2 PFD's for use on the river.

On August 3rd, Sgt. Mike Barr and RFC Brooks Varnell were on patrol on Allatoona Lake in the area of Bethany Bridge. They witnessed a pleasure boat go through the no-wake zone leaving a wake. Before the end of the area, the operator increased speed and started under higher power leaving a larger wake. The DNR officers activated their blue lights but did not get the boat stopped until the area in front of Park Marine. Once stopped, RFC Varnell explained the violation and checked the boat for safety equipment. During the check, RFC Varnell noticed the operator had slurred speech and glassy eyes. The operator admitted to drinking a few beers. RFC Varnell checked the man's level of impairment through field sobriety exercises. He was arrested and charged with boating under the influence and failure to obey the regulatory markers (the no wake zone). He was transported to the Bartow County Jail.

CHEROKEE COUNTY

On August 3rd, a call came in from Cherokee County 911 of a boat crash near Little River with a person entrapped in the boat and the boat sinking. Sgt. Mike Barr was in a patrol boat assisting a boater and immediately activated blue lights and sirens and responded to the area. Cpl. Lee Burns, RFC Brooks Varnell, and RFC Zack Hardy teamed up in another boat and immediately went to the area. On arrival, Sgt. Barr assisted the Cherokee County Fire and Rescue boat with clearing out the area to transport a victim from the boat crash to shore. Two men in a Crownline pleasure boat had run head-on into a 15 foot vertical mud bank wall on the shoreline west of the Little River Grill. The impact was so severe, the operator had to be cut free from the boat. The two men were stabilized by EMS and immediately transported to Kennestone Hospital in Marietta. It was unknown why the boat hit the shoreline at high speed and the two victims were not able to communicate. DNR's Critical Incident Reconstruction Team was contacted to assist with the investigation. The boat was seized as evidence. The incident is under review by DNR Law Enforcement.



Shown are DNR RFC Zack Hardy and a Tow Boat employee removing the damaged vessel from the water.

Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)

RABUN COUNTY

On August 2nd, while Corporal Derek Dillard was patrolling the area of Patterson Gap Road he noticed a truck pulled over at an old road bed on USFS property. Corporal Dillard also saw some foot tracks going up into the woods and followed them for a while and determined by the locations they were leading to that the subject was possibly digging ginseng. Since ginseng season was not in and the fact that the USFS has not issued any permits in the area the past few years, Corporal Dillard decided to wait the subject out. Corporal Dillard eventually located a man walking out of the woods wearing camouflage clothing and some type of pack around his waist. Corporal Dillard asked the man if he had been digging ginseng and he said yes and turned over a plastic bag with containing ginseng to Corporal Dillard. Corporal Dillard escorted the man out of the woods to his vehicle and began writing him some citations and RFC Chad Chambers arrived to the location as well. The man was cited and charged with harvesting ginseng out of season and harvesting ginseng without permission (permit). He was also warned for harvesting ginseng with plants fewer than 3 prongs.



TOWNS COUNTY

On July 31st, Cpl. Jesse Cook was patrolling the area around Towns County Park and observed a wave runner sitting next to the bank on Lake Chatuge. Cpl. Cook ran the vessels North Carolina registration on his Mobile Data Terminal and found that it had not been reported stolen. Later on in the afternoon Ranger Cook went on vessel patrol and noticed that the boat was still sitting at the same location. The location was an unusual location for the vessel to be sitting so Ranger Cook checked the registration again on his Mobile Data Terminal. After coming back not stolen a second time Ranger Cook located a phone number for the owner and called. He found out that the owners had reported the wave runner stolen this morning and the report had not been entered into the Georgia Crime Information Center files. Owner and reporting agency responded and the owner took control of the vessel. The owners believed that the thieves had stolen the wave runner and then siphoned the gas.

UNION COUNTY

On August 3rd, RFC Kevin Dyer and Union County Deputy Sheriff Andrew Hammond patrolled Nottely Lake for boating and fishing violations. Citations and warnings were issued for allowing children under the age of 13 to ride in a moving vessel without wearing a PFD, towing a skier without a mirror or observer, operating a vessel without an ID and operating a vessel at night without stern light.

At approximately 10:30pm RFC Dyer stopped a vessel for violating the rules of the road. During the vessel stop RFC Dyer observed signs of impairment from the operator of the vessel. RFC Dyer performed a series of field sobriety exercises on the operator and he was arrested for boating under the influence and violation of the rules of the road on waterways. The operator was taken to the Union County Jail for booking.

HART COUNTY

On August 3rd, Cpl. Craig Fulghum and RFC Brandon Pierce Patrolled Lake Hartwell for boating violations. Four citations were issued throughout the day for various boating violations including operating a vessel with insufficient pfd's, children not wearing pfd's in a moving vessel, and 100 foot violation's.

On August 3rd, Cpl. Craig Fulghum received a complaint on an affidavit property of several subjects fishing on a private pond without permission. Cpl. Fulghum and RFC Brandon Pierce responded to the complaint and found two subjects that had been dropped off at the pond with a boat. Both subjects were cited for fishing without permission.

DAWSON COUNTY

On August 3rd, Sgt. Lee Brown was notified by the staff at Amicalola Falls State Park that they had a subject that was lost. Sgt. Brown and RFC Mitchell Crump responded to the park. The Dawson County Sheriff's Office and Dawson County Fire Department were already on the scene. Sgt. Brown coordinated with the Dawson County Deputy and Battalion Chief. RFC Crump went to where the Appalachian Trail crossed Forest Service Roads to the location the missing subject stated in a text message he was at. RFC Crump located the subject and returned him safely to his family at Amicalola Falls State Park.

FORSYTH COUNTY

On July 28th, Cpl. Eric Sanders and RFC Barry Britt patrolled Lake Lanier for boating and fishing violations. The rangers issued written warnings and citations for allowing underage to operate a PWC and for operating a PWC without wearing a PFD.

On July 29th, RFC Barry Britt and Ranger Shane Brown were following up on a complaint of a subject holding a fawn deer. They made contact with the subject and issued a citation for "holding a game animal without a permit."

GWINNETT COUNTY

On August 2nd- 4th, Sgt. Lee Brown, RFC Mitchell Crump and RFC Kevin Godbee worked the Law Enforcement Division booth at the GON Outdoor Blast. The rangers answered questions, passed out informational materials and utilized the Kingfisher Fishing Simulator which was a big hit.

HALL COUNTY

On July 28th, Sgt. Mike Burgamy and Ranger Shane Brown patrolled Lake Lanier for boating and fishing violations. The rangers responded to a boating incident at River Forks Park. A PWC was above idle speed within 100' of the courtesy dock and hit a boat that was tied up to the dock. There were not any injuries in this incident. The PWC operator was issued a citation for operating a PWC above idle speed within 100' of an object.

On July 28th, Sgt. Burgamy and Ranger Brown responded to a call at the Bolding Mill Campground swimming area reference to a juvenile who had cut their leg. The rangers assisted the Hall County Fire Department with this call. The juvenile was taken to Northeast Georgia Medical Center with non-life threatening injuries.

Later in the afternoon the rangers were flagged down by a boater towing a boat. He was towing a boat that ran out of gas until his boat broke down. The rangers were able to tow both boats to Gainesville Marina.

On July 28th, Cpl. Adam Loudermilk and Cpl. Jason Roberson patrolled Lake Lanier. During the patrol they responded to a boating accident which resulted in the operator being arrested for reckless operation and boating under the influence of alcohol.

On August 2nd, Ranger Kevin Goss responded to Don Carter State Park with RFC Eric Isom by boat to assist Hall County Sherriff Office with the recovery of a body of a woman who was found by a fisherman. After transporting the body to the shore RFC Isom and Ranger Goss assisted with a shore sweep to help identify the woman.

On August 3rd, Ranger Kevin Goss and Cpl. Jason Robertson where patrolling Lake Lanier, observed a vessel operating in an unsafe manner and after stopping the boat and screening the operator he determined that the operator was under the influence of alcohol. Ranger Goss arrested him and took the suspect to Hall County jail.

On August 3rd, RFC Eric Isom and RFC Mark Stephens patrolled Lake Lanier by vessel. The officers escorted a lost person on PWC near Flat Creek back to where he put in at, East Bank Park. The officers stopped ten vessels during the patrol and issued citations, warnings, and verbal warnings for various violations. Also a subject was stopped operating a PWC in Big Creek at 9:55 PM. That subject was also boating under the influence and arrested.

JACKSON COUNTY

On July 31st, RFC Eric Isom received a complaint referencing a goose that was shot with an arrow off New Kings Bridge Rd. RFC Isom traveled out to the location and found the goose. The goose had a carbon arrow shot into its back. The animal had to be euthanized due to its injuries. After completing the investigation RFC Isom discovered the identity of the subject, a juvenile, who had shot the goose. RFC spoke to the parent and the juvenile making sure they understood the negative impact this type of incident has on the natural resources and image of hunters.

On August 2nd, RFC Eric Isom received a call from GSP Dispatch advising that a concerned citizen had found an injured two foot alligator near Jefferson River Road. RFC Isom traveled to the subject residence. The subject gave RFC Isom the alligator. The alligator was missing a right rear leg. The next day RFC Isom transported the alligator to Game Management so they could take it to a rehabilitator.

Region III- Thomson (East Central)

WILKES COUNTY

On August 3rd Sgt. Brian Carter and Cpl. Mark Patterson conducted a vessel patrol on Clarks Hill Lake. Later in the day Lake Boline was also patrolled for boating and fishing activity. Several vessels and fisherman were checked during the course of the days patrol. Violations detected were operating a vessel with insufficient flotation devices.

RICHMOND COUNTY

On August 2, Corporal Micheal Crawley, K9 Storm, and Corporal Ben Payne assisted the Governor's Office of Highway Safety with a large scale road check in Burke and Richmond County. This road check resulted in several DUI arrests, suspended licenses arrests, etc. There were several agencies involved including Burke County S.O., Waynesboro Police Dept., Wadley Police Dept., Georgia State Patrol, Thomson Police Dept., McDuffie County S.O. and many others.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

On August 03, RFC Grant Matherly and RFC Brian Adams patrolled the Ogeechee River from Hwy 88 to the Glascock County line. The officers were mapping public and private boat ramps along the Ogeechee River to aid in search and rescue missions. They encountered several log jams throughout their trip. Due to the extensive rain and water flow down the river in the past two months, the river has become extremely dangerous and littered with debris.

MCDUFFIE COUNTY

RFC Brian Adams patrolled the Clark's Hill WMA, Raysville Marina, Big Hart and Hwy 17 Boat Ramp. Several boating violations were documented.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

RFC Bobby Timmerman conducted an ATV patrol on the Augusta Canal on Thursday.

CLARKS HILL LAKE

CPL Brian Hobbins, RFC Leroy Ficklin and RFC Bobby Timmerman patrolled the lake on Saturday. Several boating violations were documented.

LAKE OCONEE/ MORGAN COUNTY

On Saturday August 3, US Forest Service Officer Zach Nichols and RFC Richard Tanner were patrolling the Oconee National Forest when they encountered a group of people near the water's edge. The officers noticed a 5 gallon bucket with various species of game and non-game fish inside, a stringer with several larger game and non-game fish, and a gill net placed in the water. After further investigation, one of the individuals admitted to placing the gill net to catch some of the fish. It was also determined that several of the smaller game fish were taken with a cast net. Citations were issued for possession of illegally taken fish and taking game fish by illegal methods. The officers seized the gill net and approximately 50 fish from the group. The fish were later given to a local needy family so they would not go to waste.

LAKE OCONEE

On Saturday August 3, HR Director Jim Laine, Cpl. Derrell Worth, and RFC Ricky Boles patrolled Lake Oconee for fishing and boating violations. Several boats were stopped and operators/ fishermen were cited for various violations. Among the violations cited were operating vessel with insufficient PFD's, allowing underage child to ride in moving vessel without wearing a PFD, fishing without a license, operating vessel with improper lights, operating vessel without a stern light, and towing skier without an observer. Verbal warnings were given for other infractions.

Region IV- Macon (West Central)

BIBB COUNTY

On the evening of August 2nd, Corporal Josh Swain and Sergeant Tony Fox investigated a boating incident involving two jet skis that collided on Lake Tobesofkee. A passenger on one of the craft suffered leg injuries. The investigation is on-going.

BUTTS COUNTY

On Saturday night, August 3rd, RFC Freddie Hays and Sergeant Tim Kendrick were patrolling Lake Jackson and observed a pontoon boat operating with improper lights. As they pulled their patrol boat up alongside the pontoon boat and activated their blue lights, RFC Hays illuminated the boat and the male driver got up from the console and a female sat down in the driver's seat. When the boat stopped, RFC Hays asked the male operator why he got up from the driver's seat and he said he was never driving the boat. RFC Hays asked the male operator to put on a life preserver and step into his patrol boat for some field sobriety exercises, and he did. The subject failed field sobriety testing and when RFC Hays told him he was under arrest, he kept saying he was never driving the boat. The operator then refused to take the state administered chemical test of his breath. He was charged with operating a vessel under the influence and operating a vessel with improper lights. A Butts County Deputy picked him up and transported him to the jail.

HARRIS COUNTY

On August 3rd, Corporal Jeremy Bolen performed a boating patrol on Lake Harding. He noticed a boat being operated, while displaying docking lights. Corporal Bolen stopped the boat and informed the operator about the docking lights. Corporal Bolen detected an odor of alcohol coming from the operator. Field sobriety exercises later determined that the operator was under the influence of alcohol. The operator was arrested and later transported to the Harris County Jail.

JASPER COUNTY

On Saturday night, August 3rd, Sergeant Tim Kendrick responded to a call from Jasper County Sheriff's Office stating a boat had capsized and sank near Lakeview Marina on Lake Jackson. The radio dispatcher said a passenger in the boat was missing. When Sergeant Kendrick arrived, two Jasper County Deputies were on a pontoon boat that belonged to owner of the marina and had all the occupants of the sunken boat onboard. No one was injured. The operator and two passengers were going fishing in a fourteen foot boat and had overloaded it. The fishermen stated the boat sank when they launched it at the marina and they pulled it out and drained the water out and re-launched it. The second time they launched the boat, they got approximately 100 yards from the marina before it started taking on water and sank again.

PULASKI COUNTY

On August 2nd, RFC Ronnie Beard and three supervisors from the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, along with a dozen Juvenile Probationers spent several hours at the Sand Hammock Boat Landing picking up litter and cutting grass. The juveniles picked up approximately 800 pounds of debris and trash along the 1.3 mile stretch of road and ramp area. Upon completion of the detail, workers were served hamburgers and hot dogs, and RFC Beard presented an educational program regarding fishing and boating rules.



PUTNAM COUNTY

On Friday, August 2nd, Lake Sinclair was patrolled for boating safety. Corporal Stanford and Ranger Cobb observed a vessel with light violations. Further investigations led to a BUI arrest and the subject was transported to Putnam County Jail.

On Saturday, August 3rd, Lake Sinclair was patrolled for boating safety. Corporal Copelan and Corporal Stanford observed a vessel with registration violations. The subject was arrested for BUI and transported to Putnam County jail. Ranger Reese and Ranger Cobb observed a vessel with light violations and with further investigations, the subject was arrested for BUI and transported to Putnam County Jail.

Region V- Albany (Southwest)

TERRELL COUNTY

On July 30th, RFC Jim Atchley and Ranger Quinn Fogle responded to a request for assistance from a Terrell County Deputy. The Deputy had observed a man walk out of the woods and upon seeing the deputy, throw a bucket into the woods. The Deputy retrieved the bucket and found a dead two foot alligator inside it. The man stated that he had beat the alligator with a stick and had intended to take it home and eat it. He was cited for possession of illegally taken wildlife and fishing without permission.

QUITMAN COUNTY

While patrolling Lake Walter F. George on July 31st, RFC Jim Atchley and Ranger Quinn Fogle observed a man setting trotlines in Georgia waters. The Rangers made contact and discovered that the fisherman had set out approximately 700 hooks and did not have a valid commercial license. He was cited for non-resident commercial fishing without a license.

CLAY COUNTY

RFC Jim Atchley and Ranger Quinn Fogle were patrolling Lake Walter F. George on August 1st, when they observed unusual activity aboard a drifting houseboat. Passengers on the boat were frantically throwing lifejackets and boat fenders to a man struggling in the water behind the boat. The Rangers rushed to the area and recovered the man from the water. He then told them he had fallen off a float tied behind the boat and was unable to catch the drifting vessel and was about to go under when the rangers rescued him.

WORTH COUNTY

On July 29th, RFC Chris Carlisle was conducting a patrol below the Crisp Power Dam in Warwick when he observed a person fishing with a cast net. Upon seeing the officer, the subject attempted to hide the cast net in a cooler. RFC Carlisle checked for the required fishing license and determined that the individual was in possession of 8 white bass that had been caught with the net. The subject was charged with taking game fish by illegal method and the fish were released back into the river.



Illegal cast net

DOUGHERTY COUNTY

On August 1st, Cpl. Greg Wade and Ranger Eric White participated in Albany's National Night Out. An event which brought together the general public and various public agencies to distribute much needed school supplies, food, beverages and prizes to less fortunate children in the community, as well as educate the general public about each agency's role in the community. With an outstanding attendance of over 4000 members of the community, the event was a success and enjoyed by all.

Region VI- Metter (Southeast)

WHEELER COUNTY

On July 28th, RFC Rodney Horne and Cpl. Dan Stiles conducted a vessel patrol on the Oconee River in Wheeler and Laurens Counties. Twelve vessels were stopped and inspected for boating safety equipment and registration compliance and five fishing licenses were checked. Two violations were documented for operating a vessel without registration and one for operating a vessel without Coast Guard Approved P.F.D's.

LAURENS COUNTY

On August 2nd, RFC Allen Mills assisted Game Management personnel, WL Tech III Bobby Sanders and Regional Supervisor Chris Baumann, with a special hog hunt at Beaverdam WMA. Hunters harvested two feral hogs with the aid of hunting dogs. The shooting range and boat landing were also monitored periodically throughout the day. No activity was documented.

On August 3rd, RFC Allen Mills and WL Tech III Bobby Sanders conducted area checks at Beaverdam WMA, Hugh Gillis PFA, and Riverbend WMA. Four boating safety inspections were performed and anglers were checked for license requirements and creel compliance. Six violations were documented which included fishing without WMA license on a PFA, Non-resident fishing without a license, and Non-resident fishing without a WMA license on a PFA. Verbal guidance was given for several other minor violations.



Beaverdam WMA

APPLING COUNTY

On July 31st, Cpl. Altman conducted a laser shot program for Camp Whatever in Baxley, at the Church of God. In all, 20 kids learned about gun safety and used the laser shot.

On August 1st, Cpl. Altman talked with the Kwanis Club in Baxley about new hunting regulations and the new boating law changes.

COFFEE COUNTY

On August 2nd, Sgt. Damon Winters, Cpl. Morty Wood, RFC Tim Hutto, RFC Joe Hilton conducted a HIN detail in Douglas, 37 vessels were inspected.

On August 2nd, Sgt. Damon Winters, RFC Joe Hilton, and RFC Tim Hutto assisted the Coffee County Sheriff's Office with a raid on an illegal gambling operation involving chicken fighting. Over 40 suspects were detained and charged with various violations including cruelty to animals and violation of the Georgia controlled substance act.

ATKINSON COUNTY

On August 2nd, Sgt. Damon Winters and RFC Tim Hutto responded to a drowning at the Hwy 135 Bridge. After six hours of searching, both victims were recovered.

LOWNDES COUNTY

On August 3rd, RFC Keith McDonald responded to distressed boaters on the Little River. The people were found and returned safely home.

Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)

MCINTOSH COUNTY

At approximately 10:30 pm on Friday August 2, 2013, Sgt. Wayne Hubbard received a call from GSP dispatch advising him that McIntosh Co. 911 had received an emergency call from a boater who was lost and broken down. The 911 operator was able to obtain very limited information before the cell phone connection was lost. Ranger Kate Hargrove responded to the area of Sapelo River while Sgt. Hubbard launched a patrol boat. Hargrove and Hubbard searched the area described by the dispatcher as well as the surrounding area. No lights, sounds or further contact was made with the vessel. Sgt. Hubbard cancelled the search at 1:30 am on Saturday. No other contact was made by the operator that night or the next day.

BRYAN COUNTY

On Aug. 3rd, Ranger Jordan Crawford observed two adults and two juveniles walking into the woods on Richmond Hill WMA at Belle Island Rd., carrying some large bags, possibly bait. He contacted Cpl. Chris Moore and Ranger Jason Miller to assist. The rangers followed the subjects' tracks into the woods. Cpl. Jay Morgan arrived on scene to assist and watch over the subject's trucks in case they came out behind the other rangers. The subjects were found and questioned as to what they were doing, and they admitted to placing corn as bait on the WMA. The two adults were cited for placing bait on a WMA and one man was also cited for blocking an access road with his truck.

On the afternoon of Aug. 3rd, Ranger Jason Miller cited two persons for fishing without permission at the old Bryan Fisherman's Co-op dock, which is now privately owned. He later assisted Cpl. Jay Morgan with checking fishermen and boaters taking out at Ft. McAllister public ramp. One boater was cited for not having enough life jackets on board and for operating above idle speed within 100 feet of a dock.

LIBERTY COUNTY

On July 28th, Cpl. Jay Morgan provided assistance to power company employees who were installing large power poles along I-95 at Jones Creek Bridge. The ranger stopped oncoming boat traffic as a Sikorsky Sky Crane helicopter flew over the creek carrying and installing equipment and power poles.



Helicopter installing power poles across waterway

On Aug. 2nd, Ranger Jason Miller and Cpl. Jay Morgan set up a wildlife display and boating safety/info table at the Hinesville National Night Out event at the Liberty Co. Recreation Dept., which was attended by over 200 visitors.

CHATHAM COUNTY

August 2nd Corporal Chris Moore and Ranger Jordan Crawford patrolled the waters of Chatham County for commercial crabbing violations. Several illegal crab traps were seized.

GLYNN COUNTY

On July 31st, Cpl. Chris Ridley, Captain Doug Lewis, and Sgt. Chris Hodge responded to a missing swimmer on Jekyll Island. While officers were in route to the area, the Jekyll Fire and Rescue EMT's were able to recover the swimmer. The victim was transported to the Brunswick Hospital and later moved to a Savannah hospital. Unfortunately the victim passed away the next day.

On August 1st, Cpl. Chris Ridley, Cpl. Craig Smith, Sgt. Mark Carson, RFC John Evans, Ranger Colte Shaske, and Ranger Jay Bright responded to a call from Jekyll Island in reference to a subject that had possibly drowned off the beach. While in route the Rangers were notified that the subject had been rescued by the Jekyll Fire Department water team and was back on the beach.

On August 3rd, Cpl. Chris Ridley, RFC David Brady, and RFC John Evans responded to a call in reference to a Boating Incident on Jekyll Creek. Upon arrival, officers learned that a 17 year old subject had been struck the vessel he was riding in after being thrown off the bow. The victim was transported to a hospital in Savannah in critical condition. The incident is still under investigation by the Law Enforcement Division.