

# Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report  
February 23-March 1, 2014

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**

During February, Cpl. Lee Burns was checking trout fishermen on Stamp Creek and ran into a group of teens fishing for crawfish. The teens had watched a television program of others eating crawfish and wanted to give it try, so they caught up a sack full for a crawfish dinner.



**Sack of crawfish for dinner.**



**Local group of Pine Log WMA Crawfish Hunters.**

On March 1, Cpl. Byron Young, RFC Brooks Varnell, and RFC Bart Hendrix held a boat HIN inspection site at Allatoona Dam. The officers inspected 30 vessels. For more information on registering a vessel in Georgia, go to [www.goboatgeorgia.com](http://www.goboatgeorgia.com)

### **CHEROKEE COUNTY**

In February and after midnight, Cpl. Byron Young and RFC Zack Hardy responded to a stranded boater call on Allatoona Lake. A 71 year old fisherman and two other men were stranded on a sandbar near the mouth of Little River. Cpl. Young and RFC Hardy spent several hours searching but finally located the fishermen and towed their vessel to Little River boat ramp around 1:30 A.M.

### **COBB COUNTY**

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, Sgt. Mike Barr represented the DNR Law Enforcement Division at the Safari Club International Banquet held at Adventure Outdoors in Smyrna. Over 300 attendees enjoyed sharing hunting stories and raising money for worldwide conservation efforts. Several politicians were present including Bob Barr and Jack Kingston who spoke regarding support of the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment and safe gun ownership. The event was assisted by the new “Adventure Scouts” group who spoke with Sgt. Mike Barr about youth hunting opportunities and becoming hunter safety certified.



**The SCI Banquet held at Adventure Outdoors in Smyrna, Ga. included a display of African species and items auctioned off to support wildlife conservation.**



**DNR Board member Phillip Wilheit (left) and DNR Conservation Sergeant Mike Barr at the SCI banquet held in Smyrna, Georgia.**

## **GILMER COUNTY**

On February 15<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. James Keener and RFC Joe Hill observed a vehicle rolling backwards in the roadway on Hwy 282 in Gilmer County. After stopping with the vehicle, the officers were advised that the occupants had run out of gas. The officers stayed with the vehicle to keep other vehicles from striking it because it was stalled near the crest of a hill, in the roadway. After talking to the occupants and running their identifications, suspicious activity was observed. A short time later a Gilmer County K-9 unit arrived and walked the K-9 around the vehicle. The K-9 alerted to the presence of drugs in the car. During a search of the vehicle, suspected methamphetamine was found inside the car along with a glass smoking pipe that had been hidden outside the car. The driver was arrested and charged with Violation of the Georgia Controlled Substance Act.

## **FANNIN COUNTY**

On February 16<sup>th</sup>, RFC Cody Jones was patrolling Blue Ridge WMA when he observed a vehicle that had ran off the road. A tow truck arrived on the scene with the vehicle's owner, who stated that he was driving the night before and lost control after driving on an icy patch. No one was injured in the accident.



On February 9<sup>th</sup>, RFC Joe Hill and USFS Agent Mike Tipton patrolled the delayed harvest section of the Toccoa River. The officers encountered one nonresident fisherman trout fishing without a license and without trout license. RFC Hill issued a citation for nonresident fishing without a license and a warning for nonresident fishing without a trout license. Later in the day the officers encountered a trout fisherman fishing with live bait and possessing one rainbow trout on a stringer. The subject entered the river at a location posted with a sign explaining the delayed harvest rules. RFC Hill charged the man with unlawful bait in an artificial lure stream/lake and possession of trout on a delayed harvest stream.

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, RFC Joe Hill assisted USFS Officer Mike Tipton with security at the intersection of Shallowford Bridge Road and Old Dial Road, keeping hikers out of the area while the USFS conducted a controlled burn. RFC Hill assisted Officer Tipton with issuing four subjects citations for ATV violations on USFS property.

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, RFC Joe Hill patrolled the delayed harvest section of the Toccoa River for fishing and boating violations. RFC Hill issued one subject a citation for insufficient PFD's and another subject a citation for nonresident fishing without a license and a warning for nonresident fishing without a trout license.

### **FLOYD COUNTY**

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, RFC Roger McConkey, RFC Ben Cunningham, Cpl. Tommy Gentry and Sgt. Galloway held a HIN inspection at the Lock & Dam Park. Fourteen vessels were inspected.

### **CHATTOOGA COUNTY**

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, RFC Roger McConkey participated in training with the DNR Law Enforcement Division's Aviation Unit. RFC McConkey and Cpl. James Keener trained with a helicopter utilizing long line rescue techniques to remove injured victims from remote areas of the state that are not accessible to conventional rescue equipment.

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, RFC Roger McConkey responded to a request from the Chattooga County Sheriff's Office. The deputies were at the location attempting to locate a subject for criminal trespass. The deputies were unable to check the location due to very difficult terrain. RFC McConkey was asked to assist in locating the subject due to RFC McConkey's familiarity with the large property. Fresh signs of the subject being in the area were found, but the subject was not located.

## **Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)**

### **RABUN**

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, Cpl. Jesse assisted Tallulah Falls Police Chief Bill Goatcher with the disappearance of two female juveniles. Cpl. Cook assisted with the investigation by using the databases that are provided by DNR to look up information on suspected poachers. Instead of poachers the information was used to contact known acquaintances of the two girls to see if they may have assisted with their disappearance. Approximately 20 names were checked and contacted by investigators. Late in the afternoon investigators received a call from the South Carolina Highway Patrol saying that a Trooper had located the two girls walking on I-85 near Anderson SC. Arrangements were made for the girl's safe return home back to their families.

Sincere thanks are in order to the vigilant South Carolina Highway Patrolman that notice the two young girls and got them safely back to their families.

### **DAWSON COUNTY**

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Shane Brown and Cpl. Eddie Tompkins stopped a vehicle in the late night hours for reckless driving. During the traffic stop the Rangers learn that the occupants of the vehicle are involved in an incident that the Dawson County Sheriff's office was investigating at that time. One subject was subsequently arrest for possession of methamphetamine.

### **FORSYTH COUNTY**

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, Sgt. Lee Brown and Ranger Shane Brown were patrolling the Chattahoochee River. The rangers encountered a subject who threw a package down when he saw the rangers approaching. The package contained schedule IV narcotics. The subject also had a warrant out for his arrest out of Lawrenceville. The rangers arrested the subject for his warrant and took out warrants for the narcotics and littering.

### **GWINNETT COUNTY**

On February 25<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Lee Brown provided in-service training to the Army Corp of Engineer Park Rangers at Lake Lanier. Sgt. Brown provide them information on the new boating laws and how the two agencies can assist each other more with incidents that occur on Lake Lanier and on the Chattahoochee River below Buford Dam to the Hwy 20 Bridge.

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, Cpl. Eddie Tompkins was checking fisherman and boats in Tribble Mill Park. As Cpl. Tompkins approached a subject bank fishing, the subject threw a beer bottle into the lake. The subject was also found to not have a valid fishing license. Cpl. Tompkins issued the subject citations and/or warnings for littering and Non-resident fishing without license.

### **STEPHENS COUNTY**

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Bill Bunch responded to a call for hunting without permission in the Spring Branch area. He made contact with two hunter's raccoon hunting on lands they did not have permission to hunt. Each hunter was issued a warning.

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, RFC Tim Vickery and Sgt. Stan Elrod patrolled the banks of Lake Hartwell checking fishermen. One citation was issued for fishing without a license.

### **HALL COUNTY**

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Jason Roberson came into contact with a suspicious vehicle at Lanier Point Park. He smelled a strong odor of Marijuana coming from the car and initiated an investigation. After obtaining consent to search the vehicle, he located marijuana, packaging materials, and digital scales. The driver of the car was arrested for possession with the intent to distribute, possession of a firearm in the commission of a felony, and contributing to the delinquency of a minor.



On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, Ranger Kevin Goss, along with Sgt. Mike Burgamy, were checking fishermen off Chestatee Rd. in Gainesville. Sgt. Burgamy, while checking two men, smelled marijuana on a suspect and asked to search the suspect. After the search a hand rolled marijuana cigarette was found on the first suspect, and an oxycodone pill was found on the other suspect. Both were arrested for violation of the Georgia Controlled Substance Act.

## **Region III- Thomson (East Central)**

### **RICHMOND COUNTY**

On February 27, Cpl. Ben Payne investigated the death of an individual in the Augusta Canal. After speaking with Investigators and the Coroner it was confirmed that the death was a drowning. The individual was a homeless man who had been drinking heavily and rolled off the bank of the Canal and into the water. No foul play was suspected to date.

Cpl. Ben Payne patrolled Richmond County checking without permission complaints and Phinizy WMA for fishing activity. After checking several fishing licenses he encountered an individual without a fishing license. After running the individual through the computer it was discovered that he had a warrant. The warrant was confirmed and the individual was transported to the Richmond County jail. Later in the afternoon 3 more complaints were investigated with no contacts made.

### **CLARKE COUNTY**

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> RFC Tim Butler checked several municipal fishing areas in Athens. Six citations and warnings were issued for fishing without a license, operating a vessel without registration, and operating a vessel without personal flotation devices.

On February 24<sup>th</sup> RFC Tim Butler issued a citation for fishing without permission.

### **ELBERT COUNTY**

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> Cpl. Julian Wilkins checked a number of locations on Lake Russell that are popular with bank fishermen. During the patrol two citations were written for fishing without a license.

### **COLUMBIA COUNTY**

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, Sgt. Doyte Chaffin and Cpl. Ryan Swain conducted a HIN inspection on a seventy eight foot houseboat at Trade Winds Marina. The vessel's documents were in order and a HIN was issued.

## **Region IV- Macon (West Central)**

### **COWETA COUNTY**

On Wednesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, RFC Kevin Godbee and RFC Russell Epps responded to a possible hunting out of season complaint. They checked a hunter who had shot a goose that had flown overhead while he was rabbit hunting. The hunter was cited for hunting out of season and the goose was confiscated.

## **MERIWETHER COUNTY**

On Sunday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, Cpl. Keith Waddell, Cpl. Mitch Oliver and Cpl. Jeremy Bolen patrolled Pigeon Creek WMA and the Nicholson Tract for activity. They issued 6 citations for driving around a closed gate on a WMA and two warnings for criminal trespass.

## **TROUP COUNTY**

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, RFC Russell Epps conducted a foot patrol of West Point Lake for fishing activity. 43 licenses and 11 boats were checked for license, creel limits, and equipment compliance. Two warnings were issued for failure to have a valid fishing license.

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, Sgt. Jim Bradfield assisted the Troup County Sheriff's Office with an ATV complaint in west Troup County. A complainant indicated that numerous persons were riding ATV's on the public road and were throwing beer cans out. Sgt. Bradfield got two of the ATV stopped and detained the riders until a deputy could respond. These ATV riders had not been drinking alcohol. The deputy issued the riders citations for riding an off road vehicle on the road and towed the ATV's.

## **Region V- Albany (Southwest)**

### **TIFT COUNTY**

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Eric White participated in Tift County's 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Farm Day. This event provides an opportunity for local elementary students to learn about the importance and history of agriculture and natural resources conservation. Ranger White hosted over 750 students at the DNR Law Enforcement booth, where he discussed wildlife conservation and outdoor safety awareness.



**Ranger Eric White explains the importance of wearing fluorescent orange while hunting**

## **WORTH COUNTY**

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Eric White responded to an illegal burning complaint. Upon arrival, the Ranger found officials from Georgia Forestry Commission, Worth County Fire Department, and the Worth County Sheriff Office attempting to extinguish the blaze from a large pile of debris. Ranger White surveyed the contents of the debris pile, which contained plastic containers, tire remnants, roofing materials, and other large items. White identified and interviewed the two subjects responsible for the violation and charged each with unlawful burning of egregious litter.

## **LEE COUNTY**

The Southwest Georgia Sportsman's Club, an avid supporter of conservation and the Law Enforcement Division for many years, recently recognized Cpl. Greg Wade as their Ranger of the Year. Cpl. Wade was chosen based on his accomplishments in boating and waterfowl enforcement along with several significant investigations.



**Sportsman's Club President Robert Rife presents Cpl. Greg Wade with plaque.**

## **Region VI- Metter (Southeast)**

### **DODGE COUNTY**

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> Cpl. Stiles responded to a single vehicle accident with a Dodge County Deputy. The driver left the scene on foot and Cpl. Stiles searched a nearby wooded area for the female subject. Cpl. Stiles later located the subject walking along a roadway with a pit bull on a leash. Cpl. Stiles stopped the subject who became agitated and resisted arrest. After the subject was handcuffed she began to vomit and had difficulty breathing and EMS was called to the scene. A search of the subjects bag revealed knives, several cell phones, and a large quantity of prescription medications. The subject was turned over to the Georgia State Patrol and charged with DUI (drugs), failure to maintain lane, leaving the scene of an accident, and possession with intent to distribute.

On March 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. David Reckley and Cpl. John A. Stokes patrolled the Dodge Co. Public Fishing Area. One violation for fishing without WMA license was documented.

On March 1<sup>st</sup> Cpl. Dan Stiles and RFC Rodney Horne utilized the Laser Shot shooting simulator at the First Baptist Church of Eastmans' Wild Game Supper. Twenty five children participated in the event.

### **LAURENS COUNTY**

On March 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. David Reckley, Cpl. Dan Stiles, Cpl. John A. Stokes, and RFC Rodney Horne conducted a Hull Identification Number inspection site. Twelve vessels were inspected and registration issues resolved.

### **JENKINS COUNTY**

On Friday, February 28, Cpl. Mike Wilcox was patrolling Jenkins County for small game hunting activity. While on patrol Cpl. Wilcox checked several boat landings for fishing/boating activity. When he arrived at the Hwy 25 landing on the Ogeechee River, he encountered a large group of boaters at the landing. The group of boaters left from the Louisville area on Thursday. They were hoping to make it to Savannah by Sunday. Cpl. Wilcox inspected safety equipment and registrations. He discovered several boats that had motors that exceeded the legal horsepower for that section of the river. Cpl. Wilcox documented 8 violations of exceeding the legal horsepower for the Ogeechee River.

### **EMANUEL COUNTY**

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, Cpl. Shaymus McNeely, Cpl. Mike Wilcox, and Sgt. Don Dasher investigated a complaint of, rattlesnake hunters destroying gopher tortoise burrows. Officers patrolled a large area between the Ohoopee River and Kemp rd. Officers did not observe anyone hunting rattlesnakes or damaging tortoise burrows. Officers did locate two subjects hunting feral hogs and one citation was issued for, hunting without a license.

## **CLINCH COUNTY**

On February 18<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Jason Shipes received a complaint from a licensed trapper. While checking his trap line he found two trapped coyotes shot. The subjects were riding ATVs at the time. The trapper was able to track the subjects to a campsite on the same property. Cpl. Shipes made contact with them at the camp site and after a brief interview they admitted to shooting the animals. Citations for unlawfully removing or possessing wildlife from a legally set trap were documented.

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Jason Shipes was asked to conduct an information and education program for the local Boy Scout troop. Cpl. Shipes met with the troop during their monthly meeting and discussed the importance of wildlife conservation. Cpl. Shipes also answered a number of questions from the group on a variety of topics.



## **WARE COUNTY**

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, Cpl. Jason Shipes patrolled the Satilla River for boating and fishing activity from Jamestown Landing to Hwy 84. During this patrol Cpl. Shipes checked safety and license requirements of several boaters and fisherman. Cpl. Shipes checked ten vessels documenting violations for operating a vessel without any coast guard approved PFDs and fishing without a license.

## **CHARLTON COUNTY**

On March 1st, RGR Sam Williams was conducting a vessel patrol on the St. Mary's River near Trader's Hill Boat Landing when two subjects were encountered fishing on the Georgia side of the river. During an inspection of the required boating equipment and fishing licenses, it was discovered that neither subject was in possession of a valid Georgia or Florida fishing license. The subjects stated they were Florida residents and had left their wallets in the vehicle with their fishing licenses. RGR Williams made a phone call to a contact with Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission. RGR Williams was able to verify that the operator of the vessel did possess a valid fishing license in Florida, but the passenger did not have a current fishing license. The operator of the vessel was given verbal guidance for not having proof of a valid fishing license on his person and the passenger was issued a citation for a non-resident fishing without a fishing license.

## **EVANS COUNTY**

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, RFC Debbie Brannen patrolled the Evans County Public Fishing Area. Numerous licenses were checked resulting in one violation for operating a vessel without PFD's and verbal guidance was given for entering a designed fee area without a GORP license.

Later the same day, RFC Brannen checked a landowner complaint and one violation was written for fishing without permission.

## **Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)**

### **OFFSHORE/FEDERAL WATERS**

On Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>, RFC Jack Thain, Cpl. Bill Bryson, and Cpl. Jay Morgan patrolled offshore to Grays Reef Marine Sanctuary, checking fishermen with black sea bass.

### **BRYAN COUNTY**

On Feb 24<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Jay Morgan received a call from Ga. State Patrol dispatch reference a stranded female motorist with a child on I-95 who was near his location. He tried to help the driver get the car started but found that the car was badly leaking oil and could not be moved. The driver decided to stay with the car until friends arrived.

### **GLYNN COUNTY**

On Feb 26<sup>th</sup>, Captain Doug Lewis, Sergeant Mark Carson, and RFC John Evans, along with Captain Hitchens and Lt. Kicklighter of the Georgia State Patrol, received a call about a wanted person on a boat in Glynn County. The officers located the suspect. While trying to arrest the suspect, he jumped head first out of a second story building. The suspect was chased into the marsh and apprehended without incident. He was transported to the Glynn County SO for booking.

## **WAYNE COUNTY**

On Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Randy Aspinwall was checking hunting clubs when a suspect in multiple burglaries came around him on an ATV. Cpl. Aspinwall attempted to stop the suspect but the suspect fled. In the attempt to get away the suspect wrecked the ATV and ran away on foot. After an extensive search the suspect eluded all the officers looking for him. Cpl. Aspinwall back tracked the suspect and found where two trailers on a hunting club had been broken into. He could identify the suspect so warrants were secured. Later that week Cpl. Aspinwall was able to locate the suspected burglar and he was arrested without incident.