

Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report
January 5-11, 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

On January 11th, RFC Brooks Varnell, RFC Bart Hendrix, and RFC Zack Hardy were working the special hog hunt on Pine Log WMA. RFC Hardy observed a vehicle stop on a WMA road and the occupants exit the vehicle with weapons. The hunters then shot a rifle into the woods below the vehicle. RFC Hardy called RFC Hendrix and RFC Varnell for assistance. The three rangers cited the hog hunters for hunting within 50 yards of an established WMA road. For more information on regulations regarding wildlife management areas, go to www.gohuntgeorgia.com



Rifles and handguns that two hunters had while hunting from the road on Pine Log WMA.

COBB COUNTY

On January 7th – 9th, Sgt. Mike Barr and RFC Brooks Varnell attended “Wide Area Search” training in Marietta, Ga. The course included multi-agency planning and execution of search teams during a large natural or man-made disaster where there are an unknown number of victims. The course was sponsored by the Cobb Emergency Management Agency and included participation from Cobb Fire and EMS, Bartow County Fire and EMS, the National Park Service Kennesaw Mountain, Cobb County CERT Teams (Citizen Emergency Response Teams), and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division.



RFC Brooks Varnell studies large area maps of a simulated hurricane in preparation for deploying searchers during a simulated natural disaster.



The Cobb County CERT Team and instructors from the Texas Engineering Extension Service pose after completing a three day class on “Wide Area Searches” FEMA PER 213 class.

GILMER COUNTY

On January 6th, Sgt. John VanLandingham and RFC Joe Hill were investigating a hunting deer at night case from late December. During the execution of a search warrant one subject was arrested for an outstanding arrest warrant and another subject was arrested for obstruction of a law enforcement officer. Charges are still pending in the night hunting investigation.

FANNIN COUNTY

On January 9th, RFC Cody Jones received information from a bass fisherman on Blue Ridge Lake that a hawk was caught in some fishing line and could not fly away. Officer Jones responded to the area and found a juvenile Bald Eagle suspended between the tree branch and the ground by fishing line that was tangled in its wing. Officer Jones was able to cut the fishing line which freed the Eagle. The Eagle was captured and transported to a Raptor Rehabilitator.



MURRAY COUNTY

On January 5th, Cpl. Casey Jones and Cpl. James Keener stopped a vehicle on Cohutta WMA and found that two of the occupants were in position of open containers of alcohol, and a third was in possession of a glass smoking device that contained suspected methamphetamine residue. Two suspects were charged with Violation of the Georgia Open Container Law. Charges are pending for the suspected methamphetamines and drug paraphernalia.

On January 5th, Cpl. Casey Jones and Cpl. James Keener issued citations to two Murray County men for hunting without a WMA license, hunting without a license and possession of illegal ammunition, buckshot on a WMA. The rangers were patrolling Cohutta WMA when they located two hunters exiting the woods with their hunting dogs and a shotgun.

On January 11th Cpl. Casey Jones and Cpl. James Keener issued a TN man a citation for violation of GA's open container law. The rangers were patrolling Cohutta WMA when they observed the passenger of a vehicle in possession of an open can of beer.

GORDON COUNTY

On January 10th, DNR Rangers from Region I held a region meeting at the Gordon County Fire Station off Highway 53 to discuss plans for the Law Enforcement Division operations. During the event, Cpl. Shawn Elmore was presented an award as recognition for the “2012 Georgia Boating Officer of the Year”. Presenting the award were Colonel Eddie Henderson and Captain Johnny Johnson.



Captain Johnny Johnson (left), Corporal Shawn Elmore (center), and DNR Law Enforcement Division Colonel Eddie Henderson (right) during presentation of the “2012 Georgia Boating Officer of the Year” award. For more information on Cpl. Shawn Elmore’s accomplishments in boating safety go to <http://www.gohuntgeorgia.com/node/3278>

On January 1st, RFC Roger McConkey and RFC Ben Cunningham worked a complaint area for hunting without permission, hunting over bait, and hunting deer at night. The rangers began surveillance around 5 pm. Several shots were heard on the property and three hunters were located after dark while searching for a wounded deer. As dark approached the rangers were standing at the field’s edge wearing their fluorescent orange vests when one of the hunters shined a light into the field near the rangers and shot at a coyote within 20 to 25 yards from the rangers. The hunters were found to be hunting two different properties and did not have permission for either. Citations were issued for with

hunting without permission, hunting deer without the required fluorescent orange needed, and hunting big game over bait, and possession of illegally taken wildlife for a doe that had been shot. One of the hunters was warned for hunting without license and hunting without big game license. The doe was confiscated and donated to a needy family.

FLOYD COUNTY

On Dec. 29th, RFC Ben Cunningham and Cpl. Tommy Gentry assisted the Game Management Section on a managed deer hunt on John's Mtn. WMA. There were only five deer checked in with 250 hunters.



RFC Cunningham weighs a deer at the John's Mountain check station as the successful hunter watches.

CHATTOOGA COUNTY

On January 9th, RFC Ben Cunningham responded to an illegal burn complaint in Trion, Ga. The responsible party was unable to be located and the investigation continues.

WALKER COUNTY

On January 11th, Wildlife Technician Josh Aldridge and Cpl. Tommy Gentry were asked by a landowner if they could help identify a nest that he had found on his property. The nest was 4 ½ feet off the ground, approximately 3 feet in diameter and located in a privet hedge. It was identified as an Eastern Woods Rat nest.



Eastern Woods Rat nest located in Walker County.

On January 11th, rangers in Sgt. Jeff Galloway's section held a HIN inspection site at the GSP Post in LaFayette.



Sgt. Jeff Galloway completes the required HIN paperwork as RFC Ben Cunningham answers questions.

On Jan. 4th, RFC Roger McConkey and Cpl. Tommy Gentry concluded an investigation on a hunter who harvested two deer with less than four points on one side. The hunter shot one deer on Nov. 27th and another on Dec. 28th. One citation was issued for the violation.

On January 2nd, RFC Roger McConkey and Sgt. Jeff Galloway responded to a call on Pigeon Mountain WMA in reference to a possible suicide call from Walker County 911. The subject was located unharmed in his vehicle at the Lost Wall rock climbing area of the WMA. The subject was taken to the hospital by a Walker County Deputy for evaluation.

Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)

DAWSON COUNTY

On January 7th – 10th, Capt. Thomas Barnard, Sgt. Lee Brown, Cpl. Jesse Cook, Cpl. Jason Roberson, Cpl. Eddie Tompkins, Cpl. Adam Loudermilk, RFC Barry Britt, RFC

Mitchell Crump, RFC Sane Brown, and RFC Kevin Goss assisted Dawson County Sheriff's Office and Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) with the search for two missing Dawson County men. The men's bodies were recovered late in the afternoon on Jan. 10th by members of Hall County's Dive Team, after DNR Law Enforcement Rangers located the bodies in Lake Lanier at Fredrick's Cove. The men were located by DNR's side scan sonar and VideoRay submersible remotely operated vehicle (ROV).

ROCKDALE COUNTY

On January 5th, Cpl. Eric Sanders was checking for duck hunters in Rockdale County. Cpl. Sanders found a truck parked at Ga.138 at the Yellow river. A search of the area revealed that the hunters were hunting ducks from a boat. Cpl. Sanders having knowledge of the river went to a location about ¼ mile downstream to a jam in the river. Upon arrival, two hunters were spotted trying to get out of the river. The bank was about 8 feet straight up. After watching the hunters try to get out with their kayaks, Cpl. Sanders spoke up and helped the two hunters out of the river. They stated that they were going to walk back to their truck and stick to hunting swamps. Cpl. Sanders checked their license and safety equipment and they were short two lifejackets. Cpl. Sanders gave the hunters a ride back to their truck along with a citation for no lifejackets.



BANKS COUNTY

On January 5th, RFC Eric Isom checked three different groups of waterfowl hunters hunting Commerce water shed lake. RFC Isom issued two warnings for operating a vessel with insufficient personal floatation devices and hunting without a license.

JACKSON COUNTY

On January 6th, around midnight, RFC Eric Isom was contacted by Georgia State Patrol (GSP) Dispatch requesting K9 assistance for a Trooper. RFC Isom discovered that the GSP Trooper was involved in a short chase before the subject wrecked his vehicle and fled on foot. The subject was described as a sender white male wearing a G-string. RFC Isom deployed his K9 Colt for a track. Colt tracked the subject for about a ¼ mile through the woods before tracking to the front door of a mobile home. It was discovered that the residence belong to the subject.

Region III- Thomson (East Central)

LINCOLN COUNTY

On January 11th, Cpl. Ryan Swain received a call of a missing boater on Clarks Hill Lake during a storm that had just occurred. Cpl. Swain responded to the incident location of the last know whereabouts of the boater. After a brief search, Cpl. Swain located the boater who had sought shelter underneath an abandoned covered dock. The subject was in no distress and Cpl. Swain went back in service.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

On January 12th, Cpl. Brian Hobbins apprehended three subjects in Keg Creek who were hunting waterfowl from a moving vessel. The subjects were cited and released.

WALTON COUNTY

On January 5th RFC Tim Butler located a group of three duck hunters. One of the hunters did not have a valid hunting and Georgia waterfowl license. Another hunter in the group did not have a federal waterfowl stamp. Citations were issued for hunting waterfowl without a license and hunting without a federal waterfowl license. A warning was issued for hunting without a Georgia waterfowl license.

On January 11th RFC Tim Butler located two duck hunters who were shooting a duck roost. Both hunters were issued citations for hunting waterfowl after hours.

ELBERT COUNTY

On January 11th Cpl. Julian Wilkins located eight hunters shooting a duck roost. Seven adults were charged for hunting waterfowl after hours and five ducks were confiscated.

WILKES COUNTY

On January 11th Cpl. Mark Patterson and RFC Phillip Nelson checked a dove shoot that was determined to be baited. Six adults were charged for hunting over bait and 52 dove were confiscated.

GREENE COUNTY

Cpl. Derrell Worth and Sgt. John Harwell cited two subjects for hunting rabbits without a Georgia hunting license.

Cpl. Derrell Worth cited one subject for Operating a Vessel with Insufficient PFDs and another subject for Violation of Georgia Waste Control Laws.

On January 5, while patrolling Redlands WMA, Sgt. John Harwell encountered two duck hunters along the Oconee River. Both subjects were cited for hunting without a Federal Duck Stamp and one was cited for hunting on a WMA without a WMA license.

WALTON COUNTY

On January 12, RFC Niki Spencer and Sgt. John Harwell responded to an illegal duck hunting complaint. Two individuals were cited for hunting without a federal duck stamp.

On January 11, Cpl. David Allen, RFC Ricky Boles, RFC Niki Spencer and RFC Tim Butler inspected vessels at the WRCC building in Social Circle. Around eight boats were inspected during the pouring down rain.

Region IV- Macon (West Central)

COWETA COUNTY

On January 9th, at about 1800 hours a Georgia State Trooper was at his home and heard a high powered rifle shot on the property next door. Knowing of prior illegal activity there and knowing deer season was closed in Coweta County, he got into his patrol car and went to the property to investigate. As he arrived, a white in color truck was trying to quickly leave the scene. The trooper stopped the truck and he found a freshly killed 9-point buck in the bed of the truck. The driver also seemed very nervous. He called dispatch and Sgt. Brent Railey and Cpl. Keith Waddell responded to the scene to investigate. The hunter initially told Cpl. Waddell that he had killed the deer in Fulton County with a bow at about 1700 hours and had brought the deer to the property in Coweta County to field dress it. This kill was not noted on his deer harvest record. Although he did have a bow in his vehicle, his story witness accounts and the physical evidence did not add up. Cpl. Waddell called RFC Keith Page and K9 Drake to the scene. After arrival, RFC Page and Drake checked the woods near where the hunter was leaving the field and found deer hair, a 30-06 shell casing, a 30-06 rifle in a case which had been covered with leaves and debris, as well as a baited deer stand. The hunter eventually confessed that he had killed the deer there in Coweta County with a rifle. He was transported to the Coweta County Jail and charged with hunting out of season, hunting big game over bait, failure to record deer harvest and interference with a ranger in the performance of his duties. His firearm was seized as evidence, as was the deer.

MERIWETHER COUNTY

On January 5th, Cpl. Keith Waddell patrolled Joe Kurz WMA for waterfowl and other small game hunters. He issued several cases and warnings for failure to sign in/sign out and license violations.



MUSCOGEE COUNTY

On January 7th, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen responded to a complaint of spotlighting and shots being fired. The complainant was able to get a vehicle description and a tag number. Cpl. Bolen arrived at the location and located two dead deer in the field. Cpl. Bolen contacted RFC Russell Epps and asked for his assistance and the two officers sat and watched the field until around midnight. Cpl. Bolen also contacted a Deputy and requested that they drive by the residence to see if the truck was in the yard. After learning that the truck was at the residence, Cpl. Bolen and RFC Epps loaded the deer into their patrol truck and drove over to the residence to interview the driver of the truck. The subject admitted to being involved in the incident and also gave the name of the passenger who was with him. The passenger was contacted and he consented to meeting with the officers. The also admitted to his involvement in shooting the two does in the field as well as admitting to killing a buck in another location later that night. The driver was charged with hunting deer at night, hunting from a vehicle, and hunting from a public road. The passenger was charged with two counts each of hunting deer at night, hunting from a vehicle, and hunting from a public road.

Region V- Albany (Southwest)

SEMINOLE COUNTY

On January 7th, Sgt. Rick Sellars, Cpl. Mike Binion, RFC Jim Atchley and Ranger Steve Thomas responded to a call in reference to duck hunters that were possibly in distress. The dispatcher stated that an emergency call was received by Jackson County Florida 911, but was quickly lost. The call was traced to Lake Seminole, where it was later found to have been initiated after a tragic boating incident which occurred when a boat occupied by three young duck hunters sank. Two of the hunters managed to swim to a nearby island, where they were rescued and treated for hypothermia. With the third hunter missing, DNR Rangers, GSP Troopers, deputies, and numerous civilians searched for hours in freezing temperatures for the missing hunter. A towable Side-Scan Sonar was utilized to locate the deceased victim in the vicinity of the sunken boat. This incident is under investigation by the DNR Critical Incident Reconstruction Team.

On January 10th, DNR Rangers and the GSP dive team recovered a duck boat and other evidence associated with a fatal boat incident that occurred on January 7th.



Duck Boat being recovered from scene of January 7th, fatality.

DECATUR COUNTY

On January 11th, RFC Tony Cox was on patrol when he encountered and stopped a subject for driving under the influence. The case was turned over to GSP.

SUMTER COUNTY

On January 11th, Cpl. Bob Holley was checking a hunting without permission complaint in when he encountered a deer hunter sitting in a lock-on stand. After a brief investigation, it was determined that the individual was from an adjoining hunting property and did not have permission to hunt at that location. He was not wearing fluorescent orange nor did he possess the required licenses. He had also baited the property illegally. The hunter was cited for hunting w/o permission, hunting deer without fluorescent orange, hunting big game over bait, non-resident hunting without a license and non-resident hunting without a big game license. He was instructed to remove the deer stand from the property.

Two additional hunters were found on the adjoining property. One was cited for non-resident hunting without a license and non-resident hunting without a big game license. The second was cited for hunting deer without fluorescent orange.

CRISP COUNTY

On January 11th, Cpl. Bob Holley encountered a juvenile hunting deer without fluorescent orange and without supervision. It was also determined that he had not completed a hunter education course. The juvenile's father was located hunting on the same piece of property without the required licenses. The adult was cited for non-resident hunting without a license, non-resident hunting without a big game license and for allowing a juvenile to hunt without hunter education.

COLQUITT COUNTY

On January 6th, RFC Chris Carlisle and Cpl. Greg Wade completed an investigation that began with a letter received from a concerned citizen. The information provided to the officers indicated that a "suspect" had killed a trophy whitetail deer at night in December. Armed with the information, the officers located the suspect and interviewed him about the alleged illegal activity. It was found that the suspect did kill the buck at night, as reported, and a relative had assisted him. RFC Carlisle charged both subjects with hunting deer at night and confiscated the large buck.



Confiscated Colquitt County 12 point

BROOKS COUNTY

On the morning of January 10th, Cpl. Greg Wade, Cpl. Robbie Griner, RFC Jon Penuel, RFC Chris Carlisle and Ranger Eric White conducted a concentrated patrol for waterfowl activity. During the patrol, the officers heard sporadic shooting and located a small dove shoot taking place. While checking the hunters, the officers determined the field had been baited with wheat and ryegrass seed. Those participating in the hunt were charged with hunting doves over bait.

TIFT COUNTY

Shortly after daylight on January 12th, Cpl. Greg Wade heard a volley of shots coming from a location where he had addressed waterfowl violations in the past. The officer made his way to the area and quickly located a vehicle parked in woods. While waiting at the truck, Cpl. Wade determined from the amount of shooting coming from the swamp and hunting paraphernalia present in the truck; several subjects were participating in the hunt. However, when the shooting ended, only one subject exited the swamp. The officer checked the lone hunter and then inquired if there were any other hunters remaining in the swamp. Although reluctant, the first subject admitted that he was not alone, but not sure where his companion had gone. After some effort, a second subject was eventually located, but he exited the swamp without a gun. Recognizing the hunter's obvious efforts to conceal something, Cpl. Wade questioned the man who admitted that he had tried to elude the officer due to several infractions. The subject was charged for hunting with an unplugged shotgun, hunting without a license, hunting without a federal duck stamp, hunting without a Georgia waterfowl license, and for failure to allow inspection.

TURNER COUNTY

RFC Chad Hulsey encountered this duck hunter after a successful hunt.



Turner County duck hunter

MACON COUNTY

Ranger Jesse Harrison located and cited six subjects hunting doves over bait, and confiscated forty nine doves.



Ranger Jesse Harrison with confiscated doves

Region VI- Metter (Southeast)

IRWIN COUNTY

On Jan 5th, Cpl. John A. Stokes and Sgt. David Reckley patrolled the south end of the county and located subjects hunting waterfowl. Three of the hunters on the shoot were in violation for hunting with illegal ammunition, one for unplugged gun, and another for no state waterfowl license and Federal duck stamp.

TATTNALL COUNTY

On January 10th, RFC Clint Jarriel patrolled Hwy 147 to check deer dog hunters. One citation was written for failure to display permit number on vehicle.

On January 11th, RFC Clint Jarriel patrolled Cox Rd and found an area where someone dumped out some trash. After an investigation RFC Jarriel was able to contact a suspect. The person was contacted and written a citation for unlawful dumping.

BULLOCH COUNTY

On Saturday January 11th, Cpl. Eddie Akins checked Oliver Bridge Landing on the Ogeechee River and Oliver Bridge WMA for hunting activity. Cpl. Akins efforts resulted in six hunters being checked and two violations for hunting without a Georgia Waterfowl License being documented.

Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)

CAMDEN COUNTY

On January 6th, Cpl. Craig Smith, Cpl. Chris Ridley and Sgt. Chris Hodge were investigating a night hunting complaint from the night before. The Rangers were able to make contact with some of the subjects in the area and get a confession and more evidence. The other 2 subjects were interviewed that night and one of those subjects were questioned about another night hunting incident in the same area. All 4 subjects were cited for hunting deer at night, hunting big game from a public road, and hunting from a vehicle. The driver was also cited additionally for all 3 charges from the night hunting incident that occurred in December.

GLYNN COUNTY

On January 7th, RFC John Evans received a complaint of someone illegally killing a turkey. Upon investigation, RFC Evans was able to identify the hunter and question him. He admitted to shooting a gobbler with a .22 magnum rifle. He was cited for hunting without permission, hunting out of season, and hunting with an illegal weapon.

WAYNE COUNTY

On January 11, 2014 Cpl. Randy Aspinwall was working a night hunting detail in the area of Pendarvis Rd. He watched as a pick-up truck came by and spotlighted a clear cut. Aspinwall stopped the vehicle. There was no gun in the vehicle. Both suspects were charged with blinding wildlife.

On January 12, 2014 Cpl. Randy Aspinwall was patrolling in the area of Broadhurst Rd. He saw a subject standing on top of a dog box with a shotgun on a public road. As he pulled up to the truck the suspect turned saw him and immediately jumped from the box and started running through the woods. Aspinwall gave chase and caught the suspect. The suspect was from Florida and did not have any kind of hunting license. The suspect was transported to the Wayne County Jail and charged with 1) interfering with a ranger's duties 2) hunting big game from a public rd. 3) Non-resident hunting w/o a license 4) nonresident hunting w/o a big game license 5) and hunting w/o a deer dog license.

CHATHAM COUNTY

On January 5th, Ranger Jordan Crawford patrolled Ossabaw Sound for fishing violations and waterfowl hunting. 2 boats were checked and 1 warning was issued for fishing without a license.

On January 8th, RFC Buster Cooper responded to a call relayed from Sgt. Cindy Miller, indicating that Savannah Metro Police had three individuals detained that appeared to be hunting without permission. After interviewing the three individuals citations were issued for Hunting w/o Permission, Hunting w/o a License and Hunting w/o Fluorescent Orange.

On January 11th, Cpl. Chris Moore was patrolling the banks of the Wilmington River behind Bonaventure Cemetery when he encountered three individuals fishing without the required licenses and SIP permits.