

Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report
March 23-29, 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 March 26th, Sgt. Mike Barr, Cpl. Byron Young, and Cpl. Lee Burns worked with the Bartow County Sheriff's Office CID unit regarding thefts around Red Top Mountain State Park. A suspect was arrested and transported to the Bartow County Jail. Theft of parking pass money has been an ongoing problem at Red Top Mountain State Park for over a year. The arrest is one of several recent arrests related to the thefts at Red Top Mountain State Park.



GBI Crime Scene Mobile Unit assisting DNR Law Enforcement with evidence of thefts.

COBB COUNTY

On March 28th, Sgt. Mike Barr and Intern Taylor Lawrence presented the DNR Law Enforcement Division Power-Point to a criminal justice class at Kennesaw State University. The class is studying “Policing in America” and had a lot of questions about the functions of a Conservation Officer. Most students were in their final stages of their degree and interested in internships. Intern Taylor Lawrence spoke on her internship experience with DNR and gave advice on choosing an internship related to criminal justice.



Sgt. Mike Barr works with a KSU class on “Policing in America”.

PICKENS COUNTY

On March 22nd, Cpl. James Keener issued citations for hunting big game over bait and hunting turkey with an illegal weapon to a turkey hunter who was in possession of a .17 HMR caliber rifle. Cpl. Keener also issued a warning to another subject for hunting big game over bait.

On March 22nd, RFC Joe Hill assisted Cpl. James Keener by checking an area Cpl. Keener had found to be baited with corn just prior to turkey season. The Ranger located two subjects hunting in the baited area. RFC Hill issued both hunters a citation for hunting big game over bait and one of them a warning for hunting with an unplugged shotgun.

GILMER COUNTY

On March 21st, RFC Joe Hill received a complaint in reference to a subject turkey hunting on Rich Mountain WMA. The Ranger located the subject who said he thought turkey season opened on Friday. RFC Hill issued the subject a citation for hunting out of season.

FANNIN COUNTY

On March 26th, RFC Cody Jones was working a surveillance detail on Hot House Creek. While RFC Jones was watching for fishermen who were fishing out of season, he observed two men stop at the creek, throw scrap metal out on the bank of the creek and drive off. RFC Jones stopped the vehicle and upon searching the vehicle, he found a half drunk Bud Light beer can behind the passenger seat. RFC Jones issued the driver a citation for littering and the passenger a citation for violation of the open container law.

POLK COUNTY

On March 23rd, RFC Chad Cox investigated a complaint of someone possible turkey hunting without permission. After Cox located footprints and having a tag number from complainant he was able to issue citations to two individuals for hunting without permission.

HARALSON COUNTY

On March 29th, RFC Chad Cox was patrolling for turkey hunters in the Felton Community of the county. He located a subject coming out of the woods dressed in camouflage and carrying a loaded shotgun. The subject did not have any hunting license and RFC Cox issued him citations for hunting without a license and hunting without a big game license.

CARROLL COUNTY

On March 23rd, Corporal Eric Brown and Ranger Mark Puig patrolled Carroll County opening weekend of turkey season and found two hunters in the Whitesburg area. The Rangers checked the licenses and found one hunter did not have his hunting license or his big game license. Both hunters were cited for hunting with unplugged shotgun and one was cited for hunting without a license and without a big game license.

Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)

HALL COUNTY

On March 29th, Corporal Jason Roberson, Sgt. Mike Burgamy, and Ranger Kevin Goss taught a Boating Safety class at Sunrise Cove Marina in Hall County.

DAWSON COUNTY

On March 23rd, RFC Barry Britt, RFC Mitchell Crump, Ranger Shane Brown, and Sgt. Lee Brown caught two 17 year old male subjects hunting without permission, stealing a trail camera and a lock-on deer stand from private property. The two subjects were also charged with hunting without a license, hunting with an illegal weapon and an unplugged shotgun.

On March 28th, Wildlife Technician III David Shattuck worked a detail on Dawson Forest WMA for illegal Trout fishermen at Wildcat Creek Campground. WT Shattuck was assisted by Ranger Shane Brown, WT Brandon Wall, WT Scott Bardenwerper and a Dawson County Sheriff Deputy. WT Bardenwerper and the officer worked undercover fishing while watching for violations. Ranger Brown and WT Wall patrolled around checking other areas on Dawson Forest for illegal activity outside of Wildcat Creek. Ranger Brown and WT Wall caught a subject in the Delayed Harvest Stream at Steel Bridge fishing with illegal bait and possessing 5 trout.

On March 29th, Cpl. Sanders and Wildlife Technician III David Shattuck worked the Dawson WMA and the Atlanta track for trout fishermen and turkey hunters. Several fishermen were checked on Wildcat Creek and were issued warnings. Trout fishermen were also checked at Six Mile, Devil's Elbow and Steel Bridge areas. One subject was issued a citation for illegal bait in the Delayed Harvest Stream at Steel Bridge, and warnings were issued also at these locations. While checking turkey hunters a hunter was issued a citation for parking in a Handy Cap Hunting area.

LUMPKIN COUNTY

On March 23rd, RFC Mitchell Crump and Ranger Shane Brown checked 9 vessels at Yahoola Lake and issued citations for operating a vessel without PFD's and operating with insufficient PFD's.

On March 29th, RFC Mitchell Crump and Ranger Shane Brown patrolled Dicks Creek, Boggs Creek, Dockery Lake, Chestatee River and Jones Creek on opening day of trout season. A total of 116 fishermen were checked. Written warnings were issued for fishing without a license.

HART COUNTY

On March 23rd, RFC Brandon Pierce patrolled the county for any fishing activity. RFC Pierce checked numerous fishing licenses to be proper. One in particular though did not have a fishing license and claimed to be exempt from the license. Upon investigation it was determined that the subject, in fact, was just like the rest of Georgia residents. A total of one citation was issued consisting of fishing without a license.

STEPHENS COUNTY

On March 29th, Cpl. Bill Bunch and Sgt. Stan Elrod patrolled the Lake Russell Wildlife Management Area. During the patrol citations were issued for fishing without licenses, fishing without trout licenses, and transporting loaded firearms on WMA.

RABUN COUNTY

On March 28th, Corporal Derek Dillard assisted the Rabun County Sheriff's Office with locating and arresting a subject that had several warrants for failing to appear in court. He had been eluding law enforcement for about three years while hiding out at several different locations in the Satola area of Rabun County.

WHITE COUNTY

On March 23rd, RFC Britt and CPL. Jesse Cook had observed a subject fishing in the Chattahoochee river after the subjects' friend kept driving by the area honking the horn in an effort to locate the subject to pick him up. The individual was dropped off on the river by a friend. RFC Anne Britt cited the person for fishing in closed trout waters on the Chattahoochee River off Poplar Stump Rd.

On March 24th and March 28th, RFC Anne Britt responded to illegal burning complaints near the Hall County Line off Highway 129 South. Both of the residents had been burning household garbage and the high winds caused the fires to become out of control. The fire department responded to the locations to put out the fires. RFC Britt issued written warnings to both residents and advised them it was illegal to burn anything other than natural debris.

On March 24th, RFC Anne Britt located several bags of household garbage on Gene Nix Rd and on the Chattahoochee Wildlife Management Area off Martin Branch Rd. RFC Britt investigated the garbage and found two individuals who were responsible for the dumping the garbage and cited them for unlawful dumping.

On March 29th, Sgt. Steve Seitz, RFC Anne Britt, RFC David Webb and USFS officers Jeff Angle and Derek Breedlove held a road check on the Chattahoochee Wildlife Management Area. The officers issued five citations written and two warnings during the road check. A couple fishing violations were made along with traffic violations. One male subject was cited for possession of marijuana and possession of a loaded firearm on a WMA. Other charges are pending.

UNION COUNTY

On March 28th, RFC Dyer patrolled Cooper Creek WMA for illegal turkey hunting, illegal trout fishing and violation of WMA rules and regulations. RFC Dyer issued two warnings for people transporting a loaded firearm in a vehicle.

On March 28th, at approximately 10:00 PM, RFC Dyer and United States Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer Jason Arrowood patrolled Cooper Creek WMA for violations of WMA rules / regulations. The officers checked multiple camps and gave 3 verbal warning for violation of quiet time hours, one written warning for a vehicle parked behind a barricade and one citation for operating a vehicle on a closed road.

On March 29th, RFC Kevin Dyer, SGT Steve Seitz and United States Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer Jason Arrowood assisted GSP with a license check in Cooper Creek WMA. Multiple driver license, fishing license and creels were checked. One subject was arrested and transported to the Union County Jail for driving on suspended license.

On March 29th, at approximately 9:00 PM, RFC Dyer and United States Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer Jason Arrowood patrolled Cooper Creek WMA for violations of WMA rules / regulations. The officers checked multiple camps and gave a verbal warning for violation of quiet time hours.

Region III- Thomson (East Central)

WILKES COUNTY

On March 23rd Sgt. Brian Carter and Cpl. Mark Patterson checked areas known to be baited for turkey. Two subjects were found hunting an area that had been baited with bird seed and were charged with hunting big game over bait.

ELBERT COUNTY

On March 29th Cpl. Julian Wilkins checked several areas on Lake Russell that are frequently used by bank fishermen. During this patrol, Cpl. Wilkins checked an individual that could not produce a fishing license or identification. Cpl. Wilkins used the computer in his patrol vehicle to determine that the subject did not have a valid fishing license and that there was a warrant for his arrest. The subject was arrested on the warrant and turned over to Elbert County and also charged for fishing without a license.

MORGAN COUNTY

On March 29, RFC Jessica Spencer was patrolling Morgan County when she noticed a car parked on a hunting club. She waited on the hunter to return to the vehicle to verify his hunting licenses. While verifying the hunter's information the hunter walked back into the woods claiming he left something nearby and would be right back. After not being able to verify the information of the hunter, RFC Spencer started searching on foot for the hunter. RFC Spencer located two other hunters in the woods and found that the first hunter was not allowed to be in possession of a firearm and was trying to run from RFC Spencer. RFC Spencer and Sgt. John Harwell located the hunter and placed him under arrest for: interference with the performance of a Ranger's duties, hunting without a big game license, and hunting without a license.

HANCOCK COUNTY

On Saturday, March 29, Cpl. David Allen and RFC Richard Tanner received hunting without permission complaint and that Hancock County S.O. was on scene with them awaiting the hunter to exit his location. When the Rangers arrived on scene the hunter was standing back near his golf cart that he used to enter the property. During the investigation, it was determined the hunter did not possess a hunting license nor a big game license. It was also determined that the hunter was a convicted felon from a prior drug related charge. The hunter was placed under arrest and charged with hunting on lands of another without permission, hunting without a license, hunting without a big game license and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. His 10 gauge shotgun was held as evidence in the case.

LINCOLN COUNTY

On March 29th, Cpl. Ryan Swain conducted a boating education class for Lincoln County Elementary School for Transportation Day.

Region IV- Macon (West Central)

HARRIS COUNTY

On March 23rd, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen was patrolling in Harris County, when he noticed a truck parked outside a gate on private property. While Cpl. Bolen was checking for a hunting license through DNR's license database, he heard a turkey gobbling nearby. Standing by the area listening, Cpl. Bolen heard a gunshot in the area where the turkey gobbled. After a short while, a hunter came walking out of the woods. Cpl. Bolen asked the individual if he had any luck. The hunter stated that it wasn't him who shot but this was two other hunters on another property. Cpl. Bolen checked the hunter's ammunition and informed him that he was going to utilize K-9 Ruger to back track him to the area where he just came. The hunter was released from the scene. K9 Ruger tracked the hunter through the property and across the creek where he located a wad and a spent shotgun shell which matched the hunter's ammunition that Cpl. Bolen had just checked. Cpl. Bolen and Sgt. Jim Bradfield searched the area and determined that the area was baited with crack corn. After an extensive search of the area, it was determined that the hunter most likely missed the turkey. The two officers went to the subject's residence and informed him about the evidence that was found. The subject admitted to shooting at a turkey but stated that he missed. The subject was issued a citation for hunting big game over bait.

LAMAR COUNTY

On March 29th, RFC Keith Page and K9 Drake located a truck parked on Line Road that appeared to belong to a turkey hunter. Because they were close to the Pike County line, Page called Cpl. Travis Sweat to the scene to assist. While waiting on the turkey hunter to come out of the woods, the rangers heard a shot in the direction they believed the hunter to be. K9 Drake was deployed and commanded to locate the hunter. After a short track, two hunters were located. A man and his sister were located on the property and had decided to allow the woman a chance to practice with her shotgun after an unsuccessful hunt. The woman was a resident of West Virginia and was found to be hunting without the required non-resident licenses. She was also hunting turkeys with an unplugged shotgun. She was charged with hunting without a license (non-resident) and hunting without a big game license (non-resident). The woman also received a written warning for hunting turkeys with an unplugged shotgun.

MUSCOGEE COUNTY

On March 26th, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen presented a power point presentation about the duties of Conservation Rangers to a group of Criminal Justice students at Columbus State University. After the presentation, Cpl. Bolen presented a K-9 demonstration with K-9 Ruger. The students learned about the functions and capabilities of the DNR K-9 program.

On March 29th, Cpl. Mitch Oliver patrolled the Chattahoochee River in Columbus checking bank fishermen and boats as they came to the boat ramp at Rotary Park. Cpl. Oliver checked 22 fishing license and 10 boats. Cpl. Oliver issued 3 citations for fishing without a license.

PIKE COUNTY

On Sunday, March 23rd, Cpl. Travis Sweat and Sgt. Brent Railey checked an area in Pike County in reference to a trapping complaint. The complainant said their dog went missing a couple of days prior and they found it in a foothold trap in a field near their house. The rangers patrolled the field and found two traps apparently set for coyotes, two live traps baited with corn and one other foothold trap apparently set to catch a raccoon. None of the traps had tags or names on them. The rangers found numerous other old trap set sites that indicated the trapper had been trapping here for some time. The traps were pulled and the rangers determined the trapper was accessing the property from a nearby residence. It was determined the trapper was a juvenile, who was in his first year of trapping. The rangers informed him and his parents of the laws regarding trapping and the potential consequences and returned the traps.

Region V- Albany (Southwest)

MACON COUNTY

On March 23rd, Ranger Jesse Harrison located and cited three individuals for hunting turkeys over bait.

THOMAS COUNTY

March 29th, Sgt. David Ruddell and Ranger Chris Carlisle conducted an investigation into the illegal killing of a Wood Stork. A suspect was located, interviewed and cited for taking the protected species.



Ranger Chris Carlisle with an illegally taken Wood Stork

GRADY COUNTY

On March 29th, Cpl. Mike Binion located and cited a non-resident for hunting turkey without licenses.

Region VI- Metter (Southeast)

IRWIN COUNTY

On March 23rd, Cpl. John A. Stokes and Sgt. David Reckley checked a baited turkey site along the Alapaha River. One person was found hunting turkeys over cracked corn. A citation was issued for big game over bait.

LAURENS COUNTY

On March 23rd, Cpl. Dan Stiles patrolled the Hugh M. Gillis Public Fishing Area. Fourteen anglers were checked for license compliance and five vessels were checked for registration and safety equipment. Seven violations for fishing without a WMA license on a Public Fishing Area and one violation for fishing without a license were documented.

SCREVEN COUNTY

On March 23rd, Corporal Shaymus McNeely conducted a foot patrol off Halcyondale Rd. near Ogeechee Creek to check an area baited for turkeys. Cpl. McNeely located two hunters from North Carolina in a ground blind they had built from brush, overlooking a feeder distributing shelled corn. Cpl. McNeely issued two citations for hunting big game over bait and one citation for failure to carry license on person.

JENKINS COUNTY

On March 23rd, Corporal Mike Wilcox and Sergeant Don Dasher worked in Jenkins County during opening weekend of turkey season. The officers focused on a baited area that was found a few days prior to turkey season. Cpl. Wilcox and Sgt. Dasher encountered two individuals hunting in the area of the bait. Citations were issued to both subjects for hunting over bait and one violation of hunting with an unplugged shotgun was addressed. Cpl. Wilcox and Sgt. Dasher made contact with another hunter who was hunting with an unplugged shotgun. The violation was documented.

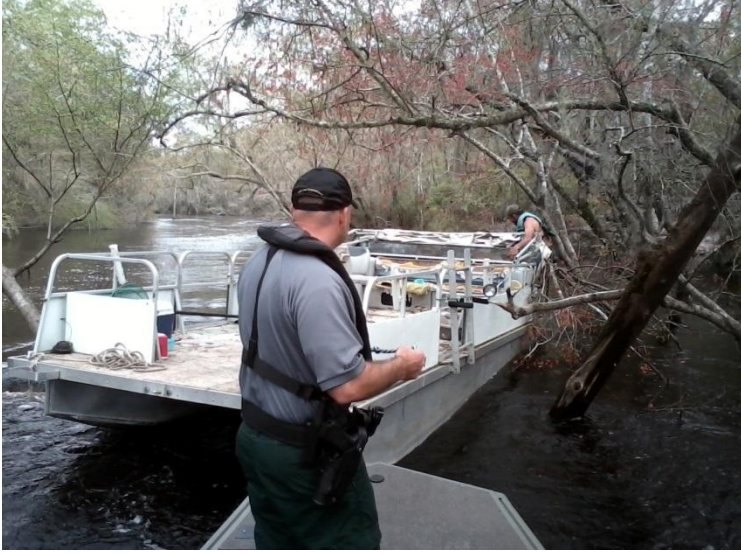
CLINCH COUNTY

On March 23rd, Cpl. Jason Shipes was patrolling for turkey hunting activity in an area where cracked corn was found prior to turkey season. While checking the area, Cpl. Shipes located a turkey blind with several decoys set up at an intersection. Upon checking the blind, Cpl. Shipes discovered no hunter was inside; however a hunter was located in a prone position in a nearby ditch. Cpl. Shipes found cracked corn spread around the blind and the decoys. Cpl. Shipes located two additional hunters in the area; both were found hunting turkeys over bait also. Each hunter was issued a citation for hunting big game over bait. The first subject was also issued an additional citation for hunting with an unplugged shotgun.



ECHOLS COUNTY

On March 23rd, Cpl. Jason Shipes and Ranger Daniel North received information that there were two stranded boats somewhere north of Statenville on the rain-swollen Alapaha River. Cpl. Shipes and Ranger North searched the river starting at the Statenville landing and located the first boat caught in trees about five miles up the river. The operator advised that he had run out of fuel while waiting for his friend in another boat to catch up to him. The officers relayed fuel from family members and the operator was able to get his boat free from the tree tops and make his way safely to the landing. The search was continued and the second boat and operator, who had also run out of fuel, was located about a mile further up the river. Once fuel was delivered to the second vessel, the operator was able to navigate to safety.



Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)

CHATHAM COUNTY

March 23rd, Cpl. Buster Cooper, Cpl. Chris Moore, Ranger Kiel Toney patrolled the area of Ossabaw Island in reference to a complaint of theft of commercial crab traps. Several commercial traps were seized in the investigation. While working the complaint the officers checked an airboat where multiple violations were documented including allowing an underage child to ride in moving vessel without a PFD, no registration, no fire extinguisher, no throwable device, and operating a vessel above idle speed within 100' of a dock.

March 23rd, Sgt. Cindy Miller responded to Mohawk Lake in Chatham County to assist with a nuisance alligator. Officers with the Savannah Chatham Metropolitan Police Department advised the alligator had been observed aggressively approaching people at the public park. It appeared evident someone had likely been feeding the alligator. When alligators lose their natural fear of people it creates a potentially dangerous situation. Since the park receives high use by fishermen and children frequent the edge; it was decided the alligator was an unfortunate candidate for removal. A local alligator trapper, Trapper Jack, responded and removed the alligator. Under normal circumstances the alligator would not be removed, and this should serve as an educational opportunity for people not to feed wild alligators.

On March 29th and 30th Ranger Jordan Crawford assisted the Georgia State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation and the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge with their 2014 Youth Turkey Hunt. Ten youth hunters took part in the hunt, with one turkey taken. The young hunters also took part in hunter education training and classes about wild turkeys and hunting.



BRYAN COUNTY

On March 23rd, Cpl. Bill Bryson cited a turkey hunter in north Bryan County for hunting with an electronic turkey call.

On March 23rd, RFC Jack Thain, Cpl. Jay Morgan, and Sgt. Phillip Scott conducted a vessel patrol in the St. Catherine's Sound area checking for shellfish violations.

On March 24th, RFC Jack Thain and Cpl. Jay Morgan conducted a vessel patrol in the Medway/Belfast/Jerico River areas checking for shellfish violations.

LIBERTY COUNTY

On March 23rd, Ranger Jason Miller and Cpl. Bill Bryson conducted a vessel patrol of the Medway River area, checking fishermen and for shellfish violations.

On March 29th, Ranger Jason Miller and Cpl. Jay Morgan checked two turkey hunters off of Mamie's Road. Later that day, the rangers patrolled the St. Catherine's and Sapelo Sounds areas. One commercial crabber was cited for failure to have his commercial ID number displayed on his vessel.

CAMDEN COUNTY

On March 22nd, Cpl. Craig Smith and RFC John Evans checked a group of turkey hunters. One of the hunters had been cited for several violations in the past, including two separate non-resident license infringements. The rangers were able to look on the computer and determine that the subject did not have a current license again this year. The subject was found and cited again for non-resident hunting without a license and non-resident hunting big game without a big game license.

GLYNN COUNTY

On March 24th, Rangers from Region 7 responded to a call reference a plane that possibly crashed between Brunswick and St. Simons Island. The Rangers along with FLETC Instructor/Student Boats, U.S.Coast Guard, and Glynn County EMA boats were on scene within an hour. The rangers were able to find several pieces of the plane that was found to be the outside of the two wings and a piece of the tail section. U.S. Coast Guard found paperwork and log books in the river that was over .5 mile north of the location that the tail section was in. Other Rangers were assisting Glynn County EMA in setting up a command post and even more were searching other rivers in the area.

The 2nd day the Rangers, Coast Guard, and Glynn County EMA resumed the search in the same area that the log book and paperwork were found. After 2 hours of side scanning, Glynn County EMA hit a target that was believed to be the plane. Camden County Sheriff's Office divers investigated the wreckage and were able to determine that it was indeed a plane but could not see into the cockpit. Two rangers were stationed at the scene until the next morning when arrangements could be made to remove the plane.

The 3rd day, the wreckage was removed from the water using a barge and track hoe. The two pilots were recovered by the Rangers and turned over to the Glynn County Coroner. The wreckage of the plane was turned over to the NTSB and FAA investigators that were on scene.

