

# Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

**Weekly Report**  
**August 9 – August 15, 2015**

**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)**

### **FLOYD COUNTY**

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Mike Barr, Cpl. Shawn Elmore, RFC Ben Cunningham, and RFC Roger McConkey assisted the local chapter of Ducks Unlimited with a Green Wings youth event at the DNR Arrowhead educational center. The group of young hunters were all interested in duck hunting and conservation. DNR Game Management Senior Wildlife Biologist David Gregory demonstrated duck banding and actually banded and released a hen wood duck. The young hunters participated in archery shooting, and shotgun shooting. Ducks Unlimited also provided a lunch. DNR RFC Ben Cunningham is very involved with every aspect of waterfowl conservation in the Coosa Valley river basin area and has offered to support waterfowl conservation groups at every opportunity.



*DNR LED RFC Ben Cunningham gave a demonstration on firearm safety to the next generation duck hunters and their parents at the Ducks Unlimited Green Wings event.*



*DNR LED RFC Ben Cunningham (left) and Cpl. Shawn Elmore (right) ran the skeet shooting station at the Green Wings DU event. Youth shooters could shoot either 20 gauge or .410 shotguns.*

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Mike Barr and RFC Ben Cunningham were patrolling Rocky Mountain Public Fishing Area. While leaving the PFA and entering the Berry College Wildlife Management Area (WMA), the officers noticed some movement crossing the road. Just past the Sand Springs Church on Sand Springs Road, the officers saw a timber rattler headed towards Lavender Mountain. The mountain ridges are known for its high population of rattlesnakes. Early season hunters, especially around Berry College WMA, may want to consider wearing snake chaps as protection and watch closely where they step.



### **WALKER COUNTY**

On August 13<sup>th</sup>, RFC Roger McConkey was on patrol in Catoosa County. While monitoring the county radio, he heard a BOLO (Be On Look Out) for a silver Pontiac car on highway 151. RFC McConkey spotted the car as it crossed the center lane and onto his side of the highway. The silver Pontiac was being followed by another two vehicles. RFC McConkey turned around and activated his blue lights and siren and the vehicle pulled into a private residence. One of the cars following also pulled in. RFC McConkey immediately noticed damage on the Pontiac on the passenger side mirror and windshield area. He made contact with the driver who showed signs of being impaired. RFC McConkey was now in Walker County and contacted the Sheriff's Office who responded. RFC McConkey also spoke with the driver of the second vehicle who stated the impaired driver had damaged his property and several other mailboxes back in Catoosa County. The Walker County Sheriff's Deputy arrived and completed field sobriety and arrested the operator for driving under the influence. The impaired operator was taken to the Walker County Jail. The Catoosa County Sheriff's Office is investigating the damage to private property in Catoosa County.

## **CATOOSA COUNTY**

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Shawn Elmore received a call in reference to a raccoon caught in a leg-hold trap in Fort Oglethorpe. Cpl. Elmore responded to the location and met with a Fort Oglethorpe police officer on scene. Cpl. Elmore located the raccoon behind the residence. Cpl. Elmore made contact with a Chickamauga man, who was doing construction on the residence. The Chickamauga man admitted to setting the trap because the home owner had been having problems with raccoons eating cat food from the residence. Cpl. Elmore explained trapping laws and remedies to stop raccoons from getting cat food. The man was issued a warning for trapping out of season. The raccoon was released from the trap and returned to the wild.

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

### **FORSYTH COUNTY**

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, at approximately 2050 hours RFC Mark Stephens and Cpl. Jason Roberson were patrolling Lake Sidney Lanier in Forsyth County near Shady Grove Campground. Officer Stephens observed a vessel being operated with improper navigation lights. After an investigation the operator was arrested for operating a vessel under the influence of alcohol and for operating a vessel with improper navigation lights. On August 15<sup>th</sup>, RFC Mark Stephens and Cpl. Jason Roberson were patrolling lake Sidney Lanier in Forsyth County near Shady Grove Campground. They encountered a man located on an island. Through an investigation officer Stephens discovered marijuana on his person. The individual was issued a citation for misdemeanor possession of marijuana.

### **HALL COUNTY**

On the evening of August 12<sup>th</sup>, RFC Kevin Goss and Sgt. Mike Burgamy were notified by GSP Dispatch about a possible drowning on Lake Lanier at Sunrise Cove Marina. RFC Kevin Goss arrived a short time later and began assisting the Hall County Sheriff and Fire Departments. When it became apparent that the victim wouldn't be recovered that evening; RFC Goss went to region III to procure the Sector Scan Sonar equipment. RFC Kevin Goss then met Sgt. Burgamy at the DNR facility at Aqualand on August 13. They went by boat to meet Cpl. Adam Loudermilk at Sunrise Cove Marina. The rangers set up the sonar equipment and quickly utilized it to find a target to send down a Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) to confirm the target was the victim. Due to the debris the ROV was unable to make a retrieval so Hall County Sheriff divers were sent in to retrieve the body.

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Jason Roberson arrested one subject for operating a vessel under the influence in Big Creek on Lake Lanier.

## **FRANKLIN COUNTY**

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, RFC Shane Sartor checked Victoria Bryant State Park for fishing violations. Several fishing licenses were checked and two subjects were issued citations for fishing without license. One subject was issued a warning for fishing without license.

## **RABUN COUNTY**

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, while Cpl. Derek Dillard and Rabun County Sheriff's Officer John Michael Grist were patrolling Lake Burton in the area of the bridge, they noticed a grey and white ski boat pulling a skier within 100 feet of a couple of docks. The skier fell and Cpl. Dillard told the operator of the boat to pick up the skier. After he did so Cpl. Dillard told the operator that he stopped him for towing a skier within 100 feet of a dock and operating a vessel without any registration numbers. Upon conducting a boating safety check for the safety equipment in the boat, Cpl. Dillard noticed that there were beer cans on the boat and could smell alcohol. Furthermore, the operator was showing signs of impairment. The boat operator was given field sobriety which he failed and he was arrested. The operator refused the state's evidentiary testing. He was transported to the Rabun County Detention Center where he was charged for operating a vessel under the influence, towing a skier within 100 feet of a dock, and warned for operating a vessel without any registration numbers.

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, RFC Joe Hill and Deputy Cody Sanders, with Rabun County Sheriff's Office, patrolled Lake Rabun for boating safety violations. The Officers stopped many boats, and issued citations and warnings for operating a vessel without CGA PFD's, fishing without a license, operating vessel within 100' of object above idle speed, and registration violations.

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Beth Gilbert received a telephone call at Black Rock State Park about an overdue hiker that was supposed to have come home the night before. The caller said they only knew the hiker was going to hike about six miles to a waterfall in North Georgia to camp out a couple of days. The caller said they had talked to the overdue hiker the day before on his cell phone and he was hiking out of the area, but a storm was coming in where he was at and they had not heard from him since. The caller told Ranger Gilbert they thought he may be near the Blue Ridge or Helen areas. Ranger Gilbert called Sgt. Steve Seitz about the situation and they checked some trail head parking lots at Black Rock state park, Tallulah Gorge, Panther Creek, Desoto Falls, Appalachian Trail, etc. in Rabun and Union Counties for his vehicle. Since the overdue hiker's cell phone was not working, Sgt. Seitz called his cell phone provider and determined the last time he used his cell phone was in Murray County near Cohutta WMA. Sgt. Seitz passed the information on to Cpl. Casey Jones in Murray County and he began to check the trail heads leading to the waterfalls on Cohutta WMA. During this time, the original caller told Ranger Gilbert they had just heard from the hiker and he had made it back to his vehicle safely and the search was called off. Ranger Gilbert called the hiker later to get some details about his trip. He told Ranger Gilbert that he got lost when he was hiking out the day before, his cell phone battery died, and he had to spend an extra night in the woods before he found his way back out to his vehicle the next day.

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

### **BURKE COUNTY**

On August 9, Ranger First Class Jeff Billips patrolled Burke County checking fishermen and boaters. Ranger Billips documented fishing without license violation at Jones Lake. On August 15, Ranger Billips checked fishing without permission complaints in Burke County. Ranger Billips patrolled boat ramps for boaters and fishermen on Brier Creek and the Savannah River. Ranger Billips documented a PFD violation with one vessel.

### **JEFFERSON COUNTY**

On August 15, RFC Matherly met with Investigator Walter Deal at Bullock County Sheriff's Office in reference to a recent Murder. RFC Matherly and Inv. Deal went to a remote dirt road in the south end of the county to look at a small body of water where it is believed that there may be an object of interest hidden. RFC Matherly surveyed the area to determine which SONAR would be most useful in locating the object of interest. After looking at the area, RFC Matherly and Inv. Deal decided they would return to the area the following week with the ROV Sonar to try and locate the object.

### **WASHINGTON COUNTY**

On August 13<sup>th</sup> Cpl. Adams patrolled the Ogeechee River for fishing violations. Several fishermen were checked with no violations detected.

On August the 15<sup>th</sup> Cpl. Adams taught a hunter Safety class for the Washington County young sportsmen foundation. All eighteen students passed with flying colors. Lunch and door prizes were donated by Segar's sporting goods and Hunting and Fishing Country.

### **LAKE OCONEE**

On August 14, Rangers Dan Schay, David Allen, and Richard Tanner patrolled Redlands WMA for illegal use of cast nets and gill nets. Several individuals were checked and no violations documented. The rangers then went to Morgan County and worked a night hunting detail where several shots were heard several miles away.

On August 15-16, Rangers David Allen, Derrell Worth, Dan Schay, John Harwell, Richard Tanner, and John Madden worked Lake Oconee. The rangers cited individuals for operating PWC without PFD's, towing skiers without an observer on PWCs, operating overloaded vessel, operating vessel with insufficient PFD's, wake zone violations, underage children in moving vessel without PFD's, and light violations.

### **ELBERT COUNTY**

On Saturday August 15<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Brian Carter, Cpl. Julian Wilkins, and RFC Phillip Nelson did a night time concentrated patrol of Elbert Co. boat ramps on Lake Russell for litter enforcement, fishing violations, and boating activity. No violations were documented.

## **COLUMBIA COUNTY**

On August 16<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Doyte Chaffin, Cpl. Brian Hobbins, Cpl. Brian Adams, RFC Robert Timmerman, and Ranger Michael Madden worked an underage drinking complaint on the Savannah River with Columbia County Sheriff's Office. During the detail, 5 underage subjects were apprehended with alcoholic beverages. Several boating and fishing violations were also detected ranging from no lifejackets to fishing without licenses. The Sheriff's Office had been receiving numerous complaints about teens drinking alcoholic beverages on the river near Euchee Creek in Bettys Branch.

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

### **BALDWIN COUNTY**

On Thursday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Matt Johnson investigated an unlawful dumping case in northern Baldwin County. Ranger Johnson was able to use a receipt that was found in a pile of trash that someone had dumped next to a hunting club gate to track down the person who had dumped the trash the week before. One subject was charged with littering.

### **LAKE SINCLAIR**

On Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Matt Johnson and Sgt. Bo Kelly were patrolling Lake Sinclair for boating violations when they observed a vessel that was towing a tube 20 minutes after sunset. During the stop, Ranger Johnson noticed that the operator appeared to be impaired. The operator agreed to perform field sobriety exercises and was found to be under the influence. The operator was arrested and charged with Boating Under the Influence, Child Endangerment (BUI), and was given a written warning for towing after sunset.

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

### **CRISP COUNTY**

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, at 02:28 am Ranger Jesse Harrison and Ranger Jay Lewis were conducting a vessel patrol on Lake Blackshear when they observed a vessel being operated without lights. A stop was conducted and it was determined that the operator of the vessel was under the influence of alcohol. A boating safety inspection also revealed that the vessel did not contain the required PFDs (life jackets). The operator was placed under arrest and transported to the Crisp County Jail where he was cited for operating a vessel under the influence, operating a vessel without PFDs and operating a vessel without a throwable device.

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

### **APPLING COUNTY**

On August 1<sup>st</sup>, Corporal Chase Altman patrolled WMA's in Appling County for ATV violations. Two ATV's were stopped on Moody Forest WMA for Illegal Operation of an ATV on a WMA.

### **JEFF DAVIS COUNTY**

On August 1<sup>st</sup>, Corporal Chase Altman, Corporal Kevin Joyce, Sergeant Jon Barnard, and Sergeant James McLaughlin responded to a complaint of a hunting accident involving a 17 year old male. He had fired a shotgun while and an obstruction had caused the end of the barrel to bust apart, sending a piece of metal into the boys chest. He was transported to the hospital and stayed overnight, but made a full recovery and was released the next day.

### **TATTNALL COUNTY**



On August 14<sup>th</sup>, Sergeant Jon Barnard, Sergeant Chris Moore and Ranger First Class Debbie Brannen responded to an in progress night hunting complaint in the Cobbtown area. A landowner had observed a pickup truck stop next to cotton field and shoot a deer. The landowner had confronted and identified the individuals. Upon investigating the complaint and locating the individual who shot the deer, it was determined they had a crop damage permit for the field. Violations for violating conditions of deer kill permit (hunting/attempting to locate from a public road) was addressed. The deer was given to a needy family.

On August 16<sup>th</sup>, Sergeant Jon Barnard and Ranger first Class Debbie Brannen patrolled for alligator hunting activity on the Altamaha River. Three boats were inspected with no violations. One boat inspected was checked while gigging bull frogs.





## **EFFINGHAM COUNTY**

On August 9<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Jordan Crawford, Sergeant Don Dasher, and Corporal Eddie Akins patrolled the Savannah River in Effingham County looking for fishing and boating activity. During the patrol several boats were checked with a total of eight violations documented. Violations included, operating a vessel without registration, operating a vessel without a throwable device, operating a vessel with insufficient PFD's, allowing a person to ride on the bow, and allowing a person underage to ride in vessel without a PFD. One subject was also arrested for Boating Under the Influence and Boating Under the Influence Child Endangerment.

On August 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 2015, Ranger Jordan Crawford, Sergeant Don Dasher and Corporal Mike Wilcox conducted night patrols of the Savannah River looking for alligator hunting activity. During the patrols a total of ten hunters were checked with no violations documented.

## **SCREVEN COUNTY**

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Shaymus McNeely and Sergeant Don Dasher responded to a call for assistance from Screven County Sheriffs' Dept. The Rangers responded to Brier Creek near Linger Long in reference to a 911 call from two fisherman saying they had been shot at and were pinned down. Upon arrival at the scene Rangers determined the 911 callers had already left the area. The Rangers and Sheriffs' Deputies located a property owner who reported having a verbal dispute with the 911 callers. No active shooter was found. The Screven County Sheriffs' Dept. is investigating the complaint.

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

### **BRYAN COUNTY**

On Aug. 9<sup>th</sup>, RFC Kiel Toney and Cpl. Jay Morgan conducted a dockside Joint Enforcement Agreement patrol for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) by checking offshore fishermen returning to shore at Ft. McAllister public ramp. Several boaters and fishermen were checked. One fisherman was cited for possession of over the limit of bait shrimp while using a bait-shrimp cast net and for fishing without a license. The limit for bait shrimp with a bait cast net is two quarts of shrimp which must be kept alive. The subject had 19 pounds of shrimp which were dead and iced down in a cooler.

On Aug. 15<sup>th</sup>, RFC Jack Thain, RFC Kiel Toney, Cpl. Jay Morgan, and Sgt. Phillip Scott conducted a Joint Enforcement patrol for NMFS in the St. Catherine's Sound area, talking to several fishermen and boaters about marine mammal protection and about feeding porpoises which is illegal. One fisherman was cited for fishing with an expired license.

## **GLYNN COUNTY**

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, RFC John Evans was patrolling for fishing and alligator hunting activity at Altamaha Park boat ramp just before dark. Evans noticed a boat coming into the ramp that was being operated by a subject he knew to be a heavy drinker. While he made contact with the operator, he noticed open beer cans and a strong odor of alcohol coming from the man. RFC Evans conducted BUI screening and the operator was arrested for boating under the influence and transported to the Glynn County Detention Center. Around 2am, RFC Evans came back to Altamaha Park. As he checked two other boats at the ramp he observed a boat operating back and forth under the bridge that would have a bow light then operate without any lights about half way across the river. Evans watched this activity for about 15 minutes and was finally able to get their attention and called them over to the ramp. As the boat approached the dock, the operator's speech was very slurred and alcohol could be smelled from over ten feet away. The operator admitted to drinking at least 24 beers and that they were smoking marijuana while they were under the bridge. He was arrested and charged with boating under the influence and operating a vessel without lights at night.

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, RFC Evans responded to an illegal fishing complaint on St. Simons Island. He found the suspect and discovered he had 3 undersized sharks and no fishing license. RFC Evans seized the sharks and charged him with possession of illegal size fish and fishing without a license.

## **CAMDEN COUNTY**

On August 14, RFC David Brady and Cpl. Chris Ridley responded to assist Camden County with a subject that had attempted suicide and then fled into the woods. After a short pursuit and search for the woman, she was located without incident or injury and released to medical personnel for observation.