

# Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division Law Enforcement Section

Field Operations

Weekly Report  
January 9-15, 2011

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 Section.



## **Region I- Calhoun (Northwest)**

### **BARTOW**

On Sunday, Ranger Zack Hardy and Corporal Lee Burns attended the Atlanta Boat Show operating the DNR Booth, answering questions, giving out fishing and hunting information, and helping kids get their first "hunting" experience. The rangers operated a shooting simulator for the kids and adults. Kids learned a thing or two about safe gun handling, aiming, and appreciation for the sport of hunting. It is estimated that more than 100 kids were able to participate and all enjoyed talking with the Rangers.



### **FULTON**

On Tuesday, RFC Barton Hendrix was patrolling near the Cherokee/Fulton County line, working on-going illegal dumping complaints in abandoned subdivisions. RFC Hendrix noticed two vehicles parked in a field off Freemanville Road in Milton. He noticed hunting equipment in the vehicles and also saw 3 kernels of whole corn in the bed of the truck. RFC Hendrix began trying to locate the hunters and found one male in a blind overlooking a large field. He spoke with the hunter who was in possession of a .22 cal rifle, who claimed to be hunting squirrels. RFC Hendrix did not find any other hunting equipment that would have suggested he was hunting deer, which is illegal to hunt with a firearm for deer in North Fulton County. The hunter did not have any hunting license and said that his friend was over on the other field. RFC Hendrix located the second hunter in a blind near the field. He told the hunter he had found corn in the bed of his truck and asked him if there was corn out in the area and the hunter pointed to a shooting lane. The hunter was 47 yards from the corn. The hunter, who was hunting with a bow, admitted putting out he corn for deer. The first hunter was charged with hunting without a license and the second hunter was charged for hunting big game over bait.

## **WHITFIELD**

On Saturday, Cpl. James R. Keener, RFC Cody Jones, and RFC Joe Hill presented hunter development programs at the North Georgia Hunting and Fishing Expo in Dalton.

Approximately 300 people enjoyed the laser shot simulator, viewed the fur collection and learned about wildlife identification, and were provided with information about hunting, fishing, and boating. People at the expo were also given hunting and fishing regulations, brochures, and other informational pamphlets.

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

### **TOWNS COUNTY**

On January 15th, RFC Anne Alexander received a telephone call from a couple of small game hunters who reported finding a human skull on USFS property off of Hwy 180. RFC Alexander, Cpl. Jesse Cook, and Cpl. Derek Dillard responded to the area along with USFS officers, GBI agents, and Sheriff's Office investigators. The officers determined it was in fact a human skull and secured the scene until the next day so they could look for more remains. On January 16th, RFC Alexander, Cpl. Cook, Cpl. Dillard, Cpl. Fred Hays, and RFC Shane Sartor along with GBI Agents, USFS officers, and SO investigators searched the area more thoroughly and recovered more human remains from the area. The human remains are being analyzed by the GBI Crime Lab to make a positive identification.

### **UNION COUNTY**

On January 21st, Sgt Steve Seitz and RFC Kevin Dyer completed an investigation about a deer that was killed over bait back in October 2011. Sgt. Seitz caught a landowner hunting deer over bait in Oct. 2011 and he previously gave Sgt. Seitz a name of a person in Florida who had killed a deer in the same area the day before. Sgt. Seitz contacted wildlife officers in Florida to interview this suspect about the deer kill. After Florida wildlife officers located and interviewed this person, it was determined they were not the ones that killed the deer. Sgt. Seitz and RFC Dyer interviewed the landowner again and he confessed to giving the officers the wrong name of the person who had killed the deer. The landowner would not divulge the name of the person who killed the deer because it is believed to be a nonresident family member. The landowner wanted to accept full responsibility for letting this person kill a four-point buck over one of his feeders. The landowner was cited for unlawful enticement of game animals and possession of illegally taken wildlife.

### **DEKALB COUNTY**

On January 20th, Cpl. Eric Sanders was answering a complaint of illegal hunting. There wasn't any sign of illegal hunting but Cpl. Sanders did find an opossum in a trap. A written warning was issued for possession of illegally taken wildlife.

### **GWINNETT COUNTY**

On January 15th, Sgt. Lee Brown and Cpl. Sanders were checking boating and fishing activity at Abbott's Bridge boat ramp at the Chattahoochee River. The rangers checked

several fishermen. Written warnings were issued to two of the fisherman for fishing with unlawful bait in an artificial only stream.

On January 21st, Cpl. Eric Sanders assisted with an Online Hunter Education Class at the Gwinnett County Annex building. After the Hunter Education Class Cpl. Sanders went to the Greater Atlanta Fishing Show and answered questions for those in attendance.

#### **FORSYTH COUNTY**

On January 15th, Sgt. Lee Brown and Cpl. Freddie Hays were patrolling for duck hunters. The rangers checked several duck hunters on Corp of Engineer property. Written warnings were issued for hunting without a Georgia Waterfowl license and hunting without HIP.

On January 15th, Sgt. Lee Brown was patrolling the Chattahoochee River at the Buford Hatchery. Sgt. Brown checked one fisherman who didn't have the required license to trout fish. A citation was issued for fishing without a license and a written warning for fishing without a trout license.

On January 20th, Sgt. Lee Brown and RFC Adam Dills were patrolling the Chattahoochee River at Lower Pool for fisherman. The rangers checked one fisherman that was fishing with two poles. The subject was issued a citation for the infraction.

#### **NEWTON COUNTY**

On January 16th, Cpl. Sanders assisted a citizen who had found a dead bird in a plastic bag dumped out. Once on the scene and investigating what kind of bird was found it was determined that it was a Great Horned Owl. Cpl. Sanders took possession of the owl and properly disposed of it.

#### **ROCKDALE COUNTY**

On January 21st, Cpl. Eric Sanders assisted a 75 year old lady who had squirrels in her attic. Cpl. Sanders set a trap to assist her with her squirrel problem.

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

#### **JOHNSON COUNTY**

On Saturday, January 21st, RFC Jeff Billips received a complaint that a subject was trapping on private property without permission. After speaking with complainant, RFC Billips and RFC Matherly went to the property on Hwy 57 just outside of Wrightsville and located the trap line of the subject that was trespassing. The Rangers set up a surveillance detail on the property and waited to see if the subject would return to check his trap line. After several hours of watching a trap that had a skunk in it, no one showed up. RFC Billips and RFC Matherly went to the residence of the suspect to interview the subject suspected of running the traps. The subject admitted to having the traps out and was not sure of exactly who the property belonged to. It was found that he had traps on two different properties. The subject was escorted while he removed all traps from the

property and was charged with trapping without permission and trapping without a license.

#### **COLUMBIA COUNTY**

On January 18th, RFC Robert Timmerman assisted a customer with a vessel inspection near Keg Creek.

#### **LINCOLN COUNTY**

On January 16th, Cpl. Ryan Swain assisted a customer with a vessel inspection at Cherokee Boat Landing.

#### **MORGAN COUNTY**

On the morning of January 21st, RFC Ricky Boles checked three duck hunters in a swamp located on the Morgan/ Newton line. The area was searched for any signs of baiting, no bait was found. One hunter was cited for not having his state waterfowl stamp. The hunters had four ducks in their possession.

#### **OGLETHORPE COUNTY**

On Thursday January 19<sup>th</sup>, RFC Phillip Nelson had a scheduled flight to fly his county. From the air he located several potential duck hunting places along with other interesting hunting areas.

#### **WILKES COUNTY**

On Saturday January 21<sup>st</sup>, Cpl. Julian Wilkins and RFC Mark Patterson checked several groups of small game hunters. Violations that were encountered included a duck hunter with only a Georgia waterfowl license and a rabbit hunter with only a fishing license. The rabbit hunter insisted it was a hunting license and that he had cut too much off the paper copy. This license was pulled up on the computer to verify. It was only a fishing license he had purchased.

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

#### **BLECKLEY COUNTY**

On January 16<sup>th</sup> RFC Tim Butler investigated a complaint of hunting deer at night from the previous weekend. As a result of the investigation two men were cited for hunting deer at night and hunting from a public road. Warnings were issued for hunting from a vehicle and possession of illegally taken wildlife.

#### **HARRIS COUNTY**

On January 21<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Jim Bradfield and Cpl. Jeremy Bolen located a duck shoot with three hunters behind a residence. The officers discovered that the area was baited with cracked corn. All three hunters were issued citations for hunting ducks over bait and possession of illegally taken wildlife. Additionally, two written warnings were issued for hunting without a federal waterfowl stamp. Two wood ducks and a Canada goose were confiscated.

### **HOUSTON COUNTY**

On January 16<sup>th</sup> Cpl. John Harkins and Sgt. Tony Fox checked a private lake regarding a complaint of persons hunting waterfowl over bait. Several hunters were checked and, although no bait was located, two of the hunters were cited for hunting without a state waterfowl license. One hunter was warned for hunting without a federal duck stamp.

### **PULASKI COUNTY**

On January 16<sup>th</sup> RFC Tim Butler apprehended three hunters shooting ducks over bait. The hunters were charged with hunting ducks over bait and possession of over the daily bag limit.

### **TALBOT COUNTY**

On January 15<sup>th</sup> Cpl. Mitch Oliver received a call about an in-progress hunting without permission complaint. Cpl. Oliver met with the landowner who advised that he observed two hunters earlier in the morning walking across his clear-cut. Cpl. Oliver, along with the landowner and a deputy, were watching the area from a vantage point when Cpl. Oliver observed one of the subjects walking on the far side of the property. Cpl. Oliver went to the area where he observed the subject and located a fresh set of ATV tracks. Cpl. Oliver then followed these tracks on foot for a distance until hearing an ATV crank and seeing the two subjects approaching on the ATV. Cpl. Oliver stopped the ATV and questioned the men as to what they were doing on the property. Neither subject had a firearm and both stated that they were not hunting but were only riding the ATV. Cpl. Oliver advised both subjects that they had already seen caring firearms. Both men then told the officer they had hidden their rifles and stated that they assumed they could hunt the property because it was not posted. Both subjects were charged with hunting without permission and hunting deer without wearing fluorescent orange and were transported to the Talbot County Jail.

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

### **DECATUR COUNTY**

On January 15<sup>th</sup>, while conducting a patrol on Silver Lake WMA, RFC Tony Cox heard a volley of shots coming from one of the ponds on the WMA. He followed the shots to the source, where he found two subjects hunting ducks. Both subjects were cited for hunting on a closed WMA, being Silver Lake was only open for big game hunting at the time. One of the hunters was also cited for hunting without a non-resident WMA license, and five ducks were confiscated in this case.

### **THOMAS COUNTY**

At 8:30 PM on January 15<sup>th</sup> (deer season had closed 2 ½ hours earlier), Sgt. David Ruddell received a complaint of night deer hunting. The caller advised that upon hearing a high-powered rifle shot and a vehicle speeding from the scene, he had gone to investigate and discovered a freshly shot deer lying in his field. Suspecting those responsible would return sometime during the night to retrieve the deer, Sgt. Ruddell, Cpl. Greg Wade and Ranger Chris Carlisle set up surveillance of the area.

At midnight, a vehicle approached the field and dropped out three suspects before driving away. As the rangers watched from nearby, the suspects walked directly to the deer without using any lights, grabbed it, and quickly headed back to the road. The truck returned a short time later and once the deer was loaded, the rangers stopped the truck and its occupants. Three adults involved in the incident were charged for hunting deer at night, hunting out of season, hunting without permission, and possession of illegally taken wildlife. Two juveniles were party to the crime, one even serving as the driver when the suspects were dropped off, but neither was charged. The deer was donated to the complainant.



(Thomas County night deer hunters and illegally taken deer)

### **TIFT COUNTY**

On January 20<sup>th</sup>, RFC Jon Penuel and Ranger Chris Carlisle patrolled the Paradise Public Fishing Area. The Rangers checked several subjects during the patrol and documented violations of fishing without a license, fishing without a WMA stamp on a PFA and operating a vessel without lifejackets.

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

### **LAURENS COUNTY**

On January 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> Cpl. Dan Stiles assisted Laurens County S/O teach the hunting and firearm safety section of the CHAMPS Program at the East Laurens Elementary School. Cpl. Stiles taught the segment four times for a total of 75 5<sup>th</sup> grade students.

On January 19<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. David Reckley, Cpl. Dan Stiles and GM Tech. Bobby Sanders located and arrested a subject camping illegally on the upper tract of Riverbend WMA. The subject fled from law enforcement on the night of January 13<sup>th</sup> after a 911 call of lost persons was reported. After the search resulted in locating two 18 year-old youths, Cpl. Stiles interviewed the two that were found. During the interview, he discovered that the subject missing was wanted for intensive probation issues. Once Cpl. Stiles talked with the probation officer, it was determined that the subject was convicted of previous drug charges and had violent tendencies; he then obtained a copy of the warrant for his arrest. Due to the danger of possible contact with other hunters on the management area,

Cpl. Stiles organized a search to find the wanted subject and turned him over to Laurens County S/O.

### **JEFF DAVIS COUNTY**

On January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 4:08am, Cpl. Barry Britt responded to a call of possible night deer hunting. While en route he stopped a Toyota Tacoma he suspected of driving under the influence. Jeff Davis Deputy Brandon Merrit charged the female with driving under the influence. Her blood alcohol content was twice the legal limit. Once on scene of the original call, Cpl. Britt interviewed a male subject suspected of night hunting deer. The subject had a loaded 30-06 scoped rifle, a semi-automatic shotgun loaded with buckshot and a pump shotgun loaded with slugs in his truck, along with a small handheld spotlight. He stated he was hunting bobcats. He was charged with hunting without a license, hunting bobcats with illegal weapons/ammo, and hunting from a motor vehicle.

Later that morning he received a complaint of someone driving in a "Foot Traffic Only" area on Bullard Creek WMA/Montgomery County Tract. He charged one male subject with driving in unauthorized areas on a WMA.

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

### **LIBERTY COUNTY**

On Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Phillip Scott and Cpl. Jay Morgan responded to a hunting incident on Hinesville Hunting Club involving a deer-dogging hunter shooting another hunter when the deer ran between the two hunters. The victim was hit by one 00-buckshot in the lower left abdomen. Both rangers continued the investigation and incident scene reconstruction the next day with assistance from Sgt. Cindy Miller and Cpl. Morty Wood.

On Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>, Cpl. Jay Morgan, RFC Jack Thain, RFC Buster Cooper, and volunteer Isaac Strickland set-up the Laser Shot shooting simulator and a wildlife display at the Ft. Stewart Wildlife Gala event which was attended by over 300 persons.

### **CHATHAM COUNTY**

On January 17, Sgt. Cindy Miller checked boat ramps in Chatham County for violations. Sgt. Miller checked an individual at Houlihann's boat ramp in Pt. Wentworth. Sgt. Miller cited a recreational fisherman for possessing an illegal size fish. The individual had a 24" red drum.

### **CAMDEN COUNTY**

On January 17, 2012 at approximately 6:30 pm, Cpl. Wil Smith received a call for assistance. Two subjects were stranded when their boat would not start. Cpl. Smith responded to the area and performed a search for the vessel. Cpl. Smith later located the vessel and towed their vessel to the nearest boat ramp.