

Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report
December 15-21, 2013

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 December 19th, RFC Zack Hardy worked on an investigation of a 9 point buck shot in western Bartow County. RFC Hardy checked and found that the hunter did not possess a valid hunting license. The hunter's license had been expired for almost 2 months. The hunter was issued citations for hunting without a license and possession of illegally taken wildlife. This incident shows the importance of hunters ensuring their license is valid and up to date.



RFC Zack Hardy with a buck from Western Bartow County confiscated from an unlicensed hunter.

CHEROKEE COUNTY

On December 15th at 445am, RFC Bart Hendrix received a call from a concerned citizen who lived on Worley Road near Ballground, Ga. The caller had heard a high power rifle shot near his house and saw a dark colored truck come back by the property. RFC Hendrix responded and found fresh blood and suspected deer hair at the gate to the property as if someone had already removed a deer. RFC Hendrix then waited until daylight and asked RFC Brooks Varnell and his K-9 “Rock” to assist him at the scene. “Rock” was able to back-track the scent to the area where the deer was suspected to be shot at night. The Rangers and “Rock” were not able to locate a spent cartridge, but did notice drops of blood on the pavement and white line of the road. RFC Hendrix slowly followed the drips of suspected deer blood up the road for a third of a mile where it stopped and turned into a driveway. In the drive and in plain view, the rangers could see a black Ford truck with suspected fresh deer blood dripping from the vehicle. They contacted Sgt. Mike Barr who started the process of obtaining a search warrant. During this time, the Rangers decided to knock on the door of the residence and speak with the occupants. The two male occupants agreed to talk with the Rangers and each relayed a different story of how they had spent their night. One person finally admitted that they had been night hunting and had shot a buck. The other person realized his story did not add up and also admitted to killing the buck with a 7mm magnum rifle as it crossed in front of their truck headlights on the roadway. Each completed a written statement as to what had happened during the night hunting incident. RFC Hendrix and RFC Varnell met Sgt. Mike Barr at another residence in the Salacoa Valley area where they seized the illegally taken buck. Charges included hunting deer at night, hunting from a motor vehicle, hunting from a public road, and possession of illegally taken wildlife. The deer was donated to a needy family for food.



RFC Brooks Varnell, K-9 “Rock”, and RFC Bart Hendrix with a confiscated buck killed by night hunters in Cherokee County about 440am.

On December 19th, Cpl. Lee Burns investigated a report of a doe deer shot off Iron Mountain Road found on property no one had permission to hunt. Cpl. Burns checked and located a large area baited with whole kernel corn and mineral blocks. Cpl. Burns was foot patrolling the area the following day and saw a person walking towards the baited area from an adjacent subdivision. The hunter went past Cpl. Burns and to a tree stand overlooking the bait. The hunter was located about 15 yards from the corn and mineral blocks. The hunter was also not wearing fluorescent orange as required during firearms deer season. The hunter was issued citations for hunting big game over bait, hunting deer without orange, and hunting without a big game license. The hunter stated he had no knowledge of the deer shot over the bait the previous day.



Whole corn located 15 yards from stand

On December 21st, Sgt. Mike Barr, Cpl. Lee Burns and Cpl. Byron Young conducted a HIN (Hull Identification Number) inspection site at Kellogg Creek boat ramp on Allatoona Lake. The officers inspected 18 boats. For more information on registering a vessel or HIN inspection site dates and locations, go to: goboatgeorgia.com



A homemade boat from Alpharetta with over 600 hours of woodwork at the HIN inspection site.

GORDON COUNTY

On December 15th, Cpl. Tommy Gentry was contacted by Gordon Co 911 in reference to subjects hunting without permission in Calhoun. Gordon Co SO dispatched a unit to the area and located three rabbit hunters on Mohawk Carpet Mill property off South Industrial Dr. The hunters did not have permission to hunt the property. The deputy held the hunters at the scene until Cpl. Gentry arrived. All three hunters were charged with hunting without permission.

FLOYD COUNTY

On December 21st, RFC Roger McConkey and RFC Ben Cunningham held a HIN inspection at Lock & Dam Park. Three boats were inspected.

CHATTOOGA COUNTY

On December 20th, RFC McConkey went to a complaint of possible hunting without permission. The Ranger arrived in the area and located two trucks. One subject was at the parked trucks and found not to be hunting. The second subject was located just down the road from his vehicle. The subject had been hunting and was walking down the road back to his truck. The complaint property was checked and no violations were found.

WALKER COUNTY

On December 17th, Cpl. Tommy Gentry checked the Rocktown parking lot on Pigeon Mtn. WMA and found 12 vehicles. Only two of the vehicles were from Georgia. The other vehicles were from all over the country as far away as California.



Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)

Region III- Thomson (East Central)

WILKES COUNTY

On December 15th Cpl. Mark Patterson checked an area known to be baited with corn and peanut butter. One subject was located hunting deer over the baited area and was issued a citation for hunting big game over bait.

On December 16th Cpl. Mark Patterson met with an individual that had in his possession a deer head obtained in a state that has been positive for the presence of Chronic Wasting Disease. The head was seized and immediately transferred to associates with the Game Management Section for CWD testing. The subject was charged with the offense of illegal importation of cervid parts from a CWD state.

RICHMOND COUNTY

On December 21, Cpl. Ben Payne worked a three year complaint of hunting waterfowl after hours off Hwy 25 in Richmond County. At approximately 5:52 pm (legal hours end at sunset 5:24pm) he heard shotgun fire coming from the complaint location. He moved to observe the activity from a better location. After watching two individuals shoot ducks he apprehended them. The violators were familiar with the location and had already shot the roosting area three times this year. RFC Jeff Billips responded to photograph the evidence and help in the investigation. After interviewing both individuals charges written were hunting waterfowl after hours, hunting without hunter education, hunting waterfowl with lead shot, hunting with unplugged shotgun, hunting without license, hunting without Ga waterfowl license. The investigation is ongoing due to the individuals hunting without permission. Landowners will be contacted.



COLUMBIA COUNTY

On December 21, Cpl. Brian Hobbins was on active patrol of Northern Columbia County when he heard several gunshots coming from a wooded area. After a brief patrol of the area, Cpl. Hobbins apprehended one subject who was squirrel hunting while being highly intoxicated. The subject was cited and arrested for Hunting while under the Influence of alcohol and transported to Columbia County Detention Center.

Region IV- Macon (West Central)

HENRY COUNTY

On December 15th, Cpl. Travis Sweat responded to an illegal hunting call on Turner Church Road. Upon arrival, the Henry County Police Department was at the scene. They had located four people in an abandoned subdivision, hunting without permission. One of the suspects had a 300 Winchester Mag and had shot at a coyote. Cpl. Sweat made contact with the owners of the property and determined that the suspects did not have permission to hunt the property. The land owner advised that he did not want to prosecute at this time, so warnings were issued to the violators for hunting without permission. One of the subjects was issued a citation for hunting without a license.

LAMAR COUNTY

On Sunday, December 15th, RFC Keith Page and K9 Drake checked an area on Mathews Road in Milner, where he had previously located several baited deer stands. While locating the baited deer stands, Page also discovered a turkey that had been freshly killed. RFC Page decided to wait until he caught someone hunting over the deer bait before questioning anyone about the turkey. On the morning of the 15th, Page and Drake checked the first baited stand but did not locate anyone. They then proceeded to the second baited deer stand. Just before reaching the second stand, K9 Drake picked up the scent of a hunter nearby. RFC Page believed that Drake smelled a hunter that was in the second stand. As Drake began to track the scent of a hunter towards the second stand, Page began to see fresh boot tracks. When the two made it to the second stand, they found that it was empty but it had muddy tracks on the ladder. RFC Page knew the tracks were fresh because he and Drake had checked the stands the night before. Fearing that the illegal hunter spotted them, Page commanded Drake to "find him" and searched the area immediately around the stand to make sure the hunter was not hiding from them. After a brief search, RFC Page saw more fresh tracks leaving area and heading back the way they came from. RFC Page then commanded K9 Drake to "Track". Drake immediately got on the fresh tracks and turned at the first intersection in the woods roads. RFC Page allowed Drake to track as fast as they could so they could hopefully catch up with the hunter before he made it back to his nearby residence. After approximately a 600 yard track, RFC Page spotted the hunter exiting the woods and headed towards a house. Page called for a Lamar County Deputy that he already had on standby to pull into the man's residence and to stop him from going inside. The deputy stopped the man as Page and Drake caught up with the man. After interviewing the man, he admitted that he saw someone with an orange vest on with a dog and got down out of the baited stand and left. Then after getting caught in multiple lies, the man owned up to killing the turkey on November 30th at approximately 5:30pm with a 30-06 as he was leaving his deer stand. The man was charged with hunting big game over bait, hunting deer without wearing an orange vest, hunting out of season (turkey), and hunting with illegal weapon/ammo (30-06).



TROUP COUNTY

On December 21st, Sgt. Jim Bradfield located a duck shoot near West Point Georgia. RFC Russell Epps, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen and K-9 Ruger arrived at the location to assist. Around 70 rounds were fired during this duck hunt between seven hunters. After checking the hunters' licenses, the Rangers checked the swamp for bait and determined that the area had been baited with corn. All 7 hunters were issued citations for hunting ducks over bait and one citation was issued for hunting without a GA waterfowl license. One of hunter was issued a citation for littering for leaving two beer cans in the duck swamp. There were two written warnings issued for hunting without a licence. Two ducks, a wood duck and hooded merganser, were confiscated as evidence.



UPSON COUNTY

On Monday, December 16th, at approximately 3:00 am, Cpl. Susan Morris received a phone call from a City of Thomaston Police officer advising her he had just stopped a suspicious vehicle in the city limits of Thomaston based on a complaint from a citizen for shots fired from a vehicle. The officer found a .22 rifle in the front seat and one of the suspects admitted to the officer they were out hunting and shooting at deer. Morris interviewed the occupants of the vehicle, three white males and a white female. The first suspect questioned admitted they were riding around looking for a deer. He told Morris they had shot a doe and it was in the trunk of the vehicle. She advised the police officer and he opened the trunk and found the doe. The suspects were taken to the Upson County Sheriff's Office and charged with hunting deer at night, hunting big game from a public road and hunting from a vehicle.

Region V- Albany (Southwest)

CRISP COUNTY

On December 15th, Cpl. Bob Holley concluded an investigation into illegal hunting activity. The investigation resulted in a search warrant being obtained for the residence of an unlicensed individual who was suspected of killing five bucks between early

September and late November of 2013. Cpl. Holley, Sgt. Al Greer, Ranger Jesse Harrison and Cpl. Greg Wade served the search warrant on the residence and seized four sets of antlers, 50 packages of processed deer meat, and other evidence to include a quantity of suspected marijuana. A 5th set of antlers was also recovered from a local deer processor. The subject was arrested and transported to the Crisp County Jail where he was interviewed and charged with five counts of hunting without a license, five counts of hunting without a big game license, one count of hunting out of season (deer), three counts of taking over limit of antlered deer and one count of possession of marijuana.

On December 17th, Cpl. Clint Martin was investigating a hunting without permission complaint when he noticed foot prints and ATV tracks on the property. He followed the tracks and discovered a site where a deer had been killed in a food plot. Cpl. Martin then followed the tracks back to a nearby residence and made contact with its occupants. After a brief interview a subject at the residence was cited for hunting without permission, hunting without a license and hunting without a big game license.

On December 21st, Cpl. Bob Holley was conducting a patrol when he came upon several individuals hunting doves on a field baited with wheat. RFC Chad Hulsey responded for assistance and twelve hunters were charged with hunting doves over bait. One hunter was also charged with hunting with an unplugged shotgun. A total of twenty three doves were confiscated.



Cpl. Bob Holley with doves confiscated from a baited field.

DOOLY COUNTY

On December 15th, Cpl. Clint Martin and RFC Chad Hulsey responded to a fatal hunting incident. The initial investigation revealed that the straps securing the hunters lock-on stand to the tree broke, resulting in the individual falling to the ground. The hunter was not wearing a safety harness and died at the scene. The incident is currently under investigation by the DNR Law Enforcement Division's Critical Incident Reconstruction Team.

On December 17th, Cpl. Clint Martin was conducting a patrol when he encountered a subject that had harvested a buck deer. While speaking with the individual it was revealed that he had taken the deer without the proper licenses. He was issued a citation for hunting without a license and given a warning for hunting without a big game license. The buck was confiscated.



Confiscated Dooly Co buck

TERRELL COUNTY

On December 19th, Cpl Scott Carroll located two vehicles parked in a field near a wet weather pond. Cpl Carroll noticed the time was nearing sunset and set up surveillance on the vehicles. Cpl. Carroll then heard the hunters shooting ducks well past the legal hour and waited on them to exit the pond. Four individuals were charged with hunting migratory birds after hours and one charged for an unplugged shotgun.

COLQUITT COUNTY

On December 20th, Cpl. Robbie Griner assisted the Sheriff's Office with locating suspects wanted for burglarizing a home earlier in the week. The burglars took thirteen firearms during the burglary, which included shotguns, rifles and handguns. A large assortment of ammo, knives, tools, holsters and an IPAD was taken as well. Cpl. Griner tracked the suspects from the home where the incident occurred, to a mobile home located nearly a mile away. While he was tracking the suspects he located several guns they had buried in the woods. He and the investigators found two suspects at the mobile home who were interviewed and arrested for the crime.



Recovered items

BROOKS COUNTY

On December 21st, RFC Jon Penuel, RFC Chris Carlisle and SGT David Ruddell worked a concentrated patrol to address illegal waterfowl hunting activity. During the patrol, the Rangers had one subject flee the pond he was hunting. RFC Tim Hutto and K-9 Gauge were called to assist in locating the subject, who was found a short time later. As a result of the concentrated patrol, charges were made for hunting ducks over bait, hunting without licenses, hunting with illegal ammunition, interference with a ranger's duties, failure to allow inspection and concealment of wildlife taken illegally. Four baited ponds were located during the patrol.

Region VI- Metter (Southeast)

LAURENS COUNTY

On December 17th at 1:00 a.m. Cpl. Stiles was contacted by a Laurens County Deputy who had discovered an abandoned vehicle with a freshly killed deer in the bed. After an investigation two subjects were located and charged with possession of illegally taken wildlife. The deer was confiscated and donated to a needy family.

On December 17th, Cpl. Stiles presented a DNR Law Enforcement Division Power Point presentation to the Exchange Club in Dublin. Thirty-one persons were in attendance. After the presentation Cpl. Stiles answered questions from the audience.

On December 18th, while on patrol Cpl. Stiles located three individuals hunting waterfowl near the Oconee River. One subject was charged with over the limit and another subject was charged with hunting waterfowl without Federal duck stamp.

SCREVEN COUNTY

On Sunday December 15th, Cpl. Eddie Akins and Sgt. Don Dasher checked Oliver Bridge Landing on the Ogeechee River for duck hunting activity. Shots were heard and located over in Screven County. Investigation of the shooting activity resulted in three hunters being checked and one violation for hunting without a federal duck stamp being documented.

EFFINGHAM COUNTY

On Sunday December 15th, Cpl. Eddie Akins and Sgt. Don Dasher checked Steel Bridge Landing on the Ogeechee River for boating and duck hunting activity. Their efforts resulted in two boats and four hunters being checked. One violation for hunting without fluorescent orange was documented.

On Saturday December 21st, Cpl. Eddie Akins checked Steel Bridge for Boating and duck hunting activity. Cpl. Akins' efforts resulted in one boater being checked and a violation for operating an illegal horsepower motor on the Ogeechee River being documented.

BULLOCH COUNTY

On Saturday December 21st, Cpl. Eddie Akins checked Oliver Bridge Landing for boating and duck hunting activity. Cpl. Akins efforts resulted in two boats, three hunters and two violations being documented. The violations were for hunting with an unplugged gun and operating an illegal horsepower motor on the Ogeechee River.

JENKINS COUNTY

On Sunday, December 15, Sgt. Don Dasher and Cpl. Mike Wilcox were patrolling Jenkins County for hunting and fishing activity. They were checking a piece of property that had a landowner affidavit. The officers encountered three individuals fishing in a creek. None of the individuals had permission to fish and none of them had a fishing license. The violations that were documented were fishing without permission and fishing without a fishing license.

EVANS COUNTY

On December 21st, RFC Debbie Brannen was working an area for night deer hunting. A vehicle approached the area and a spotlight was shined from the vehicle into the field she was watching. The vehicle was stopped and was occupied by 2 adult males. Citations for hunting deer at night, hunting big game from a public road and hunting from a motor vehicle were issued to the subjects.

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY

On December 21st, Sgt. Jon Barnard, Cpl. Chase Altman and Ranger Patrick Gibbs worked an illegal hunting complaint on Bullard Creek WMA during a sign-in deer hunt. The rangers received word that someone was hunting waterfowl on the management area while it was closed for small game. From the area they were listening in they could hear shots being fired in multiple directions. Altman went one direction while Barnard and Gibbs went in another. Groups of hunters were located in each direction; however one of the groups was beyond the boundary of the management area. Violations were documented for Hunting on a Closed WMA, and Hunting w/o a Georgia Waterfowl Conservation License.

TOOMBS COUNTY

On December 21st, Sgt. Jon Barnard and Ranger Patrick Gibbs checked three duck hunters at the No. 1 boat landing on the Altamaha River. One of the hunters didn't have a Georgia waterfowl license and was issued a warning.

WARE COUNTY

On December 21st, Corporal Josh Chambers, Corporal Jason Shipes, RFC Mark Pool, and Ranger Daniel North patrolled Dixon Memorial WMA during a quota deer hunt. Approximately 22 hunters were checked and verbal guidance was given for minor violations. One hunter was charged for transporting a loaded firearm in a motor vehicle on WMA property.

CLINCH COUNTY

On December 15th, Cpl. Jason Shipes and RFC Mark Pool were checking a complaint area when they located several hunters' actively hunting deer with dogs on unpermitted property. A total of eight hunters were located resulting in citations for hunting deer with dogs on unpermitted property along with several license violations.

ATKINSON COUNTY

On December 20th, RFC Tim Hutto observed two subjects exit a vehicle on a dirt road he was watching for night deer hunting. RFC Hutto observed the driver and passenger shoot a pistol from the dirt road. The subjects also threw their beer cans into the dirt road just as they were attempting to leave the scene. RFC Hutto initiated a traffic stop on the vehicle and began to question the suspects. As RFC Hutto was placing the driver under arrest, the passenger fled the scene on foot through a wooded area. K9 Gauge was used to track the suspect after backup arrived. The subject was tracked almost a mile from the scene where it was determined he was picked up by a motorist. The driver was arrested and charged with violation of Ga's open container law, discharge of a firearm while under the influence, and discharge of a firearm from a public rd. Warrants were taken on

the passenger for littering, discharge of a firearm from a public road, violation of Ga's open container law, obstruction of an officer, and felony possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

On December 21st, Sgt. Damon Winters and RFC Tim Hutto checked a duck shoot on highway 221 in Pearson. Violations were documented for hunting ducks over bait, hunting waterfowl with lead shot, hunting with an unplugged shotgun, and hunting waterfowl without a federal waterfowl stamp.

LANIER COUNTY

On December 21st, RFC Tim Hutto checked an area of the Alapaha River in Lakeland for fishing and littering activity. Four subjects were located fishing behind Burnt Church on the River. Three of the subjects were issued citations for non-res fishing without a license. The fourth subject was arrested and charged with misdemeanor possession of marijuana and non-res fishing without a license. The fourth subject also had a warrant out on him from Ohio.

BERRIEN COUNTY

On December 22nd, RFC Tim Hutto was dispatched to a night deer hunting call on highway 129 in Alapaha. RFC Hutto along with Berrien County Deputies and a GSP trooper investigated the incident. Four citations and warnings were issued for blinding wildlife with lights.

Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)