

Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report
December 20 – December 26, 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)

BARTOW COUNTY

On December 21st, RFC Zack Hardy completed an investigation on a deer hunter in Kingston. RFC Hardy obtained information that the hunter had harvested several deer this season. RFC Hardy spoke with the hunter and discovered that the hunter had killed two bucks and had not recorded his deer harvest on his hunting license. The hunter was issued a citation for the violation.

On December 26th, RFC Zack Hardy located a hunter in a ladder stand on Miller Farm Road, the hunter was hunting over bait and hunting without the required fluorescent orange. A citation and warning were issued for hunting big game over bait and hunting deer without fluorescent orange.

CHEROKEE COUNTY

On December 21st, RFC Zack Hardy responded to a call on McGraw Ford WMA in Ballground. RFC Hardy located two deer hunters on the area. The area was closed at the time. RFC Hardy provided information to the hunters on the dates and hunting regulations on the area. RFC Hardy issued warnings for hunting on a closed WMA.

POLK COUNTY

On December 25th, RFC Chad Cox answered a complaint about someone shooting two deer at 12:45am. RFC Cox was able to locate the subject a few hours later. The subject was arrested for hunting deer at night, hunting from a motor vehicle and hunting from a public road.

Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)

HALL COUNTY

On December 27th, RFC Kevin Goss and Sgt. Mike Burgamy were on vessel patrol for waterfowl hunters and fishing activity on Lake Lanier when they encountered a SEADOO floating in the mouth of Flat Creek. RFC Kevin Goss ran the registration number while Sgt. Burgamy called in to get the status of the vessel. When the PWC came back stolen the rangers made contact with the owner who confirmed he had reported stolen six weeks prior. The PWC's cover was still on the vessel and all indications were that it had only broken loose from the dock. They then towed the PWC to the owners dock, secured it, and contacted Hall County dispatch for a recovery.

BARROW COUNTY

On December 20th, Ranger Chris Kernahan initiated a Hunting Incident Investigation, in reference to a subject who fell approximately 15 feet from a climbing tree-stand. The subject accidentally fell while in the act of climbing. The impact from the fall broke the subject's back, resulting in paralysis. The subject failed to wear a safety harness.

On December 22nd, Ranger Chris Kernahan patrolled Fort Yargo State Park for fishing activity. While on patrol, Ranger Kernahan observed 3 subjects fishing, as well as smoking marijuana. Ranger Kernahan made contact with the subjects, and through the course of an investigation, found each of the subjects in possession of marijuana. Additionally, two of the subjects were found to be fishing without a license. The subjects were issued citations for the violations.

HART COUNTY

On December 21st, RFC Brandon Pierce was called by the Hart County Sheriff's Office in reference to assisting with a search warrant conducted on a residence. During the search a barred owl was found in the freezer and also a burn pile was discovered in the backyard. The subject was arrested and charged with several felonies regarding illegal substances and firearms. RFC Pierce also issued citations for hunting/possession of birds or parts thereof and unlawful burning of egregious litter.

On December 24th, Corporal Craig Fulghum patrolled Hart County for waterfowl violations. During his patrol Cpl. Fulghum apprehended three subjects hunting ducks without permission on an affidavit property in Shoal Creek. In addition to the hunting without permission charges multiple license violations including two counts of hunting without a federal duck stamp, hunting without a license and hunting without a Georgia waterfowl license were documented.

HABERSHAM COUNTY

On December 26th, Sgt. Steve Seitz, RFC Chad Chambers, and Ranger Beth Gilbert investigated a hunting incident where someone fell out of a tree stand. The officers determined that a 58 year old man had been hunting in a lock on style tree stand all morning and when he started climbing down, he lost his grip and fell approximately 20 feet to the ground. The hunter used a cell phone to call for help and when EMT's arrived, he was transported to the hospital in Gainesville, GA where he was treated for four broken ribs.

WHITE COUNTY

On December 26th, RFC Anne Britt met with a male who was involved in a search and rescue incident off Martin Branch Rd. on the Chattahoochee Wildlife Management Area on November 27. The male was a hunting guide who had separated from his client and needed assistance getting out of the woods. GSP air spotted him and he was rescued by Sgt. Steve Seitz, RFC Britt and White County Fire Department personnel. On November 28, RFC Britt found the guide did not have a valid hunting license, big game license or a WMA stamp. RFC Britt found the guide had warrants out for his arrest from Carroll County. RFC Britt and Deputy Richard Tabbott with the White County Sheriff's Department made contact with the guide on December 26, in Helen, GA. The guide was arrested and charged for hunting without a big game license, hunting without a WMA stamp and he was warned for hunting without a license. Deputy Tabbott transported the guide to the White County Detention Center and placed on hold for Carroll County.

Region III- Thomson (East Central)

CLARKE/OCONEE COUNTY

On Saturday December 26, Cpl. Mark Patterson and RFC Tim Butler patrolled Clarke and Oconee counties. During this patrol they checked four duck hunters in Oconee County who were legal. They checked one subject fishing without a license in Clarke County. This subject was issued a citation for fishing without a license and released.

GREENE COUNTY

Cpl. Derrell Worth cited subjects for operating a vessel without a registration, personal flotation devices and hunting deer without a license.

HANCOCK COUNTY

Cpl. Derrell Worth assisted Hancock County Investigators on 12/25/15 in the locating of a 53 year old missing subject. He had been missing for 2 days before he was reported missing. After 4 hours, subject was located in Atlanta.

LAKE OCONEE

Cpl. Derrell Worth assisted 2 Jet Ski operators that were stranded due to mechanical issues.

LINCOLN COUNTY

On December 26th, Cpl. Swain Ryan conducted a concentrated patrol of Northern Lincoln County for waterfowl hunting activity. Twenty hunters were checked during the patrol. Seven violations were detected and documented. All subjects were either cited or warned and released.

Region IV- Macon (West Central)

TROUP COUNTY

On December 24, 2015, Sgt. Jim Bradfield, Sgt. Brent Railey, and Cpl. Jeremy Bolen were requested to assist with the flooding in Troup County. The officers staged up with a boat at the Troup County Fire Department. The officers were later requested to launch a boat at a residence, where a house was flooded. Items were recovered from the residence for the homeowner during the operation.

Region V- Albany (Southwest)

COLQUITT COUNTY

On the evening of December 20th, Ranger Eric White was patrolling south Colquitt County when heard shotgun blasts coming from a pond near his location. Ranger White located the area and made contact with three subjects hunting ducks after legal hours. Corporal Greg Wade and Ranger White returned the following day and examined the pond. The officers found that the pond was baited with corn and wheat. Cpl. Wade and Ranger White charged the three subjects with hunting ducks over bait, hunting ducks after hours, and various license violations.

On December 24th, Ranger Eric White was on patrol when he heard shotgun blasts coming from an area near his location. Ranger White responded to the area and encountered three subjects hunting ducks. After inspecting their licenses, equipment, and the pond they were hunting, it was determined that the pond was baited with corn. Ranger White charged the three subjects with hunting ducks over bait.

Region VI- Metter (Southeast)

BEN HILL COUNTY

On Dec 20th, Corporal John A Stokes patrolled for illegal waterfowl hunting activity. Two poachers were located and charged for hunting without permission.

WILCOX COUNTY

On Dec 26th, Corporal John A Stokes received a call about people hunting without permission. Stokes met with the land owner and found two suspects hunting. The two suspects were charged for hunting without a license, hunting without big game license, one was charged for hunting without fluorescent orange and both were given warnings for hunting without permission.

DODGE COUNTY

On December 26th, Ranger First Class Allen Mills conducted a morning patrol for waterfowl hunting activity. Two vessels and five hunters were checked for compliance. Verbal guidance was given for one minor violation.



Young hunter with two wood ducks taken with his dad.

On December 26th, RFC Mills and Corporal Dan Stiles were investigating suspicious activity occurring at Horse Creek Wildlife Management Area. Gates were being removed and roads damaged. Following up on a lead, the officers located a suspect and conducted an interview. The violator was charged with driving over/around device to prevent vehicle access and damaging government property.



Gate violator drove around.

LAURENS COUNTY

On December 21st, Corporal Dan Stiles served an arrest warrant on a subject for excavating artifacts without written permission and obstruction from an investigation that began on December 8th. More charges are pending in the continuing investigation.

On December 26th, Corporal Stiles responded to a night hunting complaint in progress. At approximately 11:00 p.m. a vehicle drove past Cpl. Stiles' location and then stopped in the roadway. Cpl. Stiles heard a gunshot and conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle. Cpl. Stiles noticed a strong odor of alcoholic beverage coming from the driver of the vehicle who had also exited his vehicle and discharged a shotgun from the roadway. The subject was charged with discharge of a firearm from a public road and was turned over to the Georgia State Patrol and arrested for driving under the influence.

WHEELER COUNTY

On December 26, Ranger First Class Rodney Horne conducted a River Patrol on the Oconee River. One vessel was checked for boating safety equipment and four poachers were apprehended. Nine violations were documented for hunting after legal hours, hunting without a license, hunting without a federal duck stamp, hunting without a Ga Waterfowl license, operating a vessel without navigational lights during hours of darkness, and operating a vessel without Coast Guard Approved Personal Flotation Devices.

CLINCH COUNTY

On December 20th, Sergeant Patrick Dupree encountered two deer-dog hunters on the Cason Break. Both hunters were holding loaded rifles and hunting from the dirt-grade public road. Both were issued warnings for the violation. Later that afternoon, Sgt. Dupree was travelling on GA187 and encountered another deer-dog hunter parked alongside the highway and standing on his dog box with rifle in hand. The hunter's hunting licenses had expired in early November. The hunter was charged with hunting big game from a public road and non-resident hunting without a big game license. He was warned for non-resident hunting without a license and hunting deer with dogs without a deer-dog license.

On December 23rd, Corporal Jason Shipes observed several vehicles parked along a busy highway. As Cpl. Shipes approached he observed one individual standing in front of his truck holding a shotgun. Upon observing Cpl. Shipes approaching his vehicle, the hunter quickly placed the weapon into his vehicle. As Cpl. Shipes exited his vehicle, he could hear hounds approaching. The individual was issued a citation for hunting big game from a public road.

On December 24th, Corporal Jason Shipes assisted area officers with locating a wanted subject. Officers from the Ware County Sheriff's Department, Department of Corrections (Probation), and Homerville Police Department responded to the area and were able to arrest the subject on felony warrants. While processing the suspect officers found nearly seven ounces of marijuana and recovered a stolen weapon.



Stolen weapon and illegal narcotics seized at felony arrest in Clinch County.

On December 26th, Ranger Judd Sears encountered multiple hunters participating in a deer-dog hunt. Two subjects were checked that didn't have the required licenses and permits. One individual did not possess a big game license and deer-dog license. Another hunter did not have a deer-dog permit displayed on his vehicle. Violations were documented for hunting without big game license, hunting deer with dogs without deer-dog license and operating a motor vehicle without permit number displayed.

WARE COUNTY

On December 20th, Ranger Judd Sears conducted night deer hunting surveillance. A vehicle approached Ranger Sears's location at approximately 9:30 PM and a high-powered light was shined out both sides of the vehicle in a sweeping and searching motion across the field. Ranger Sears initiated a traffic stop on this vehicle and the driver of the vehicle said they were shinning for deer. Ranger Sears interviewed both of the occupants and found a high-powered spotlight in the front seat of the vehicle, but no weapons were found. Ranger Sears noticed a plastic barrel in the bed of the vehicle that contained deer blood and deer meat. The driver was questioned about the barrel and he stated he had harvested a deer the day before. It was found that this subject did not possess any hunting licenses. Ranger Sears escorted the subjects back to their residence where they had the deer meat stored. Violations were documented for blinding wildlife with lights, non-resident hunting without a license, and non-resident hunting without a big game license.

Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)

CAMDEN COUNTY

On December 21, Cpl. Chris Ridley and Cpl. Craig Smith responded to a call of a missing boater on the St. Mary's River. The Rangers searched throughout the night with no avail. The next morning they located the boat that had floated up into the marsh due to the high tides that coastal Georgia was experiencing. Throughout the next five days Ranger Colte Shaske, RFC John Evans, RFC David Brady, RFC Richard Tanner (from the Thomson Region), Cpl. Craig Smith, Cpl. Chris Ridley, Cpl. Kate Hargrove, Sgt. Mark Carson, Sgt. Damon Winters, Sgt. Jim Atchley (from the Albany Region) and Captain Bob Lynn worked with the Camden County Sheriff's Office in the search and recovery efforts for the man. On the morning of December 26th the body was recovered from the St. Mary's River.

On December 22nd, Ranger Colte Shaske and CPL Craig Smith received a call from the Camden County Sheriff's Office in reference to a Hunting Accident. Upon arrival the Rangers found the victim's son with Deputies and that the victim was being transported to the hospital due to the severity of his injuries. The victim's son stated that he received a phone call from his father stating that he had shot himself in the knee. The victim was able to climb down out of his climber, get on his ATV and pick up his son. The two men drove out of the woods and met the ambulance and first responders. The victim's son and the Rangers were able to find where they were hunting and find the climber and weapon. The victim suffered extensive injuries to his knee but is expected to make a full recovery.