

Department of Natural Resources

Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report

November 8 – November 14, 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 November 8th, Cpl. Byron Young and RFC Zack Hardy responded to Allatoona WMA off Hwy 20. A hunter called and stated that two men were hunting without orange near the shoreline of Allatoona Lake. RFC Hardy located the hunters, one of which was carrying a .22 rifle. The hunter stated that he was hunting turkeys. The hunter was issued a citation for hunting on a closed WMA and issued a warning for hunting without a WMA license.

On November 8th, Cpl. Byron Young responded to a call about subjects hunting without permission on Cobb Legion Hunting Club off Woodall Rd. Cpl. Young searched the area and located two hunters on the property. The hunters were both issued citations for hunting without permission.

On November 14th, Sgt. Derek Dillard, Corporal Brooks Varnell, and RFC Bart Hendrix worked a night deer hunting detail in response to citizen complaints on the west end of Bartow County. Corporal Varnell was set up watching a couple of soybean fields and a truck came by his location and shined a light into the two fields. Corporal Varnell stopped the truck and the occupant had two loaded rifles and a loaded pistol in his truck. Seconds later, Sgt. Dillard and RFC Hendrix arrived on scene and assisted Corporal Varnell with the stop. Also, there were open containers of beer in the truck that the driver was drinking. The officers determined that the driver was not under the influence of alcohol through a series of field sobriety exercises. He was arrested and charged with hunting deer at night, hunting big game from a public road, hunting from a motor vehicle, and open container of alcohol.

Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)

BARROW COUNTY

On November 14th, Ranger Chris Kernahan was patrolling for hunting activity in Barrow County. While on patrol, the Ranger checked two deer hunters, and found that one of them had just harvested a deer, but failed to tag it. The Ranger also discovered that each hunter failed to possess a Hunting License, Big License, or Deer Harvest Record. Both subjects were issued citations for the violations

On November 15th, Ranger Chris Kernahan was working a hunting without permission complaint in Barrow County. The Ranger found two subjects hunting without permission, and not wearing fluorescent orange while deer hunting. Through the course of his investigation, the Ranger found each subject to be in possession of marijuana, as well as drug related objects. Both subjects were issued citations for the violations.

JACKSON COUNTY

On November 14th, RFC Eric Isom and his K9 partner Colt located two subjects hunting illegally in the Nicholson area. Both subjects received citations and warnings for hunting big game over bait and hunting deer without wearing fluorescent orange.

HALL COUNTY

On November 14th RFC Kevin Goss responded to a hunting without permission complaint near Chicopee Woods in Oakwood. When he arrived RFC Kevin Goss entered the woods and located the hunter not wearing orange. RFC Goss questioned the hunter who admitted he didn't have permission. The hunter was charged with hunting deer with fluorescent orange and given a hunting without permission warning and Gainesville Police issued a trespass warning.

STEPHENS COUNTY

On November 11th, Corporal Josh Chambers patrolled northeast Stephens County. During this patrol, a hunter was charged with hunting bears over bait and hunting bears without wearing fluorescent orange. The hunter was also issued warnings for hunting without a hunting license and hunting without a big game license. On this same date another hunter was given verbal guidance on the violations of hunting deer over bait, hunting without permission, and hunting without fluorescent orange.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

On November 10th, Corporal Craig Fulghum patrolled Hart and Franklin Counties for hunting violations. During his patrol two violations were documented throughout the day. The violations consisted of one subject not recording deer harvest on his hunting license and one subject burning illegal materials behind a residence.

Region III- Thomson (East Central)

ELBERT COUNTY

On November 14th Sgt. Brian Carter and Cpl. Mark Patterson worked hunting without permission complaint. Violations of hunting without permission, hunting big game over bait, and hunting deer without wearing fluorescent orange were documented when one subject was located on the complainant's property. The Rangers also conducted a patrol of the Vaughtner WMA.

WILKES COUNTY

On November 14th Sgt. Brian Carter and Cpl. Mark Patterson checked a without permission complaint, conducted a patrol of the Fishing Creek WMA, and a general patrol of portions of the county. During the course of the days patrol violations of non- resident hunting without a license and big game license were documented.

CLARKE COUNTY

On November 14th RFC Tim Butler located four subjects hunting deer without permission. Citations were issued for hunting without permission, hunting without a license, hunting deer without wearing fluorescent orange, and hunting with illegal ammunition.

BURKE COUNTY

On November 5, RFC Jeff Billips responded to a night hunting complaint. The poacher had killed a buck in the road next to a residence. The residents gave chase but the poacher escaped. Evidence was collected at the scene. The case remains under investigation.

On November 6, RFC Billips responded to an ongoing complaint of hunting without permission. RFC Billips patrolled on foot in an attempt to locate any poachers. RFC Billips met with an adjoining landowner to determine if he had given anyone permission to hunt. The complaint remains under investigation. RFC Billips and Corporal Ben Payne were conducting night hunting surveillance when Georgia State Patrol (GSP) Troopers requested assistance at an armed robbery attempt at a local business. The robber was shot by the store owner and fled the scene with a bullet in the buttocks. The robber was later found at a hospital in Augusta.

On November 7, RFC Billips completed an investigation of hunting without permission. RFC Billips and Burke County Sheriff's deputies served arrest warrants on the suspect. The suspect attempted to hide under his residence but was quickly apprehended without incident. The suspect was arrested for convicted felon in possession of firearm, hunting without permission, hunting without license, and hunting without big game license. It should be noted that the suspect had killed a spike on the morning of the incident.

Later that day, RFC Billips was conducting night hunting surveillance when he received a complaint of night hunting in another part of the county. While on the way to the complaint, RFC Billips was contacted by GSP dispatch for a complaint of night hunting at another location. RFC Billips assisted the Sardis Police Department when a large fight erupted with gunfire. GSP Troopers and Burke County Deputies arrived to restore order. RFC Billips then received another night hunting complaint and located a man and woman on an ATV in the area. Despite being in the immediate area of the complaint, they did not have a firearm or light. RFC Billips determined the man was under the influence and contacted a GSP Trooper. The man was arrested for DUI and the night hunting complaint remains under investigation.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

On November 13, RFC Matherly wrapped up an investigation that resulted in the seizure of an eight point white tail buck, and the following citations: Hunting without license, hunting without big game license, failure to record deer harvest and one over the limit of antlered deer. RFC Matherly used his network of informants, a deer processor and Facebook to follow a lead that a subject had killed 3 bucks this year. After acquiring all evidence RFC Matherly interviewed the subject which had no choice but to confess with the evidence that had been compiled.

On November 15, at approximately 7:20 PM, RFC Matherly received a call that a subject was stranded on the Ogeechee River between Robert Lamb Rd and Sandy Ford boat ramp off HWY 88 on the Jefferson Washington County line. RFC Matherly contacted Cpl. Brian Adams and Cpl. Ben Payne to assist with the Search and Rescue event. The person had set out to float the river at approximately 5:30 AM that morning, and a friend was to pick him up approximately 8 miles downriver at dark. The individual had planned on making the trip by floating in an inner tube type float designed for duck hunting, and hunting the river banks. The Rangers utilized the state aviation unit to search the banks of the river with FLIR to locate the individual. At approximately 10:26 PM RFC Matherly and Cpl. Brian Adams made contact with subject in a swampy area off the side of the Ogeechee River. The individual was approximately 1 to 1 ½ miles from the boat ramp that he was trying to travel too. The Rangers arranged for a Gold Cross EMS Unit to meet them at the road way to care for subject as soon as they were able to get him out of the woods. The individual was treated for the onset of hypothermia, and was taken back to his hunting camp.

WARREN COUNTY

On November 15, RFC Matherly and Sgt. Doyte Chaffin investigated a report of possible hunting without permission and hunting over bait. Two subjects were located on the property and found not to be wearing the Fluorescent Orange vest while hunting deer. The subjects were cited for hunting without the Fluorescent Orange vest, but were not found hunting in the baited stand. An investigation is ongoing in reference to the allegation of hunting without permission complaint.

On November 13th, Sgt. Doyte Chaffin and Cpl. Brian Adams investigated a hunting incident. The incident involved one subject who fell from a tree stand. The subject died due to the incident. The scene was turned over to RFC Tim Butler with CIRT.

GREENE COUNTY

On November 13, Cpl. Derrell Worth cited one subject for hunting big game over bait and hunting without fluorescent orange.

NEWTON COUNTY

On November 9, Ranger Dan Schay was called to an in-progress without permission complaint. Ranger Schay made contact with subject matching the description made by the complainant. Ranger Schay verified that the subject had permission to hunt on the property. Upon further investigation he issued one citation for failure to record harvest.

On November 14, Ranger Dan Schay and Cpl. Derrell Worth patrolled property in Newton County and issued unlawful enticement of game and hunting big game over bait citations.

On November 14, Ranger Dan Schay and Cpl. Derrell Worth were investigating a hunting complaint when they saw a subject in a box stand hunting without orange on an adjacent property. Contact was made with the subject and a citation was issued for hunting deer without florescent orange.

WALTON COUNTY

On November 19, Rangers Dan Schay and Jason Harrison responded to an in-progress complaint in Walton County: Citations for unlawful enticement of game and allowing underage hunter to hunt while unsupervised were issued.

HANCOCK COUNTY

On November 14, Cpl. David Allen and Ranger Jason Harrison checked a bait and without permission complaint in South Hancock. The rangers found the subject over the property line and issued a citation for hunting w/out permission.

On November 15, Cpl. David Allen responded to a night hunting complaint in progress in west Hancock County. Cpl. Allen sat in the area and worked the complaint, no activity was reported.

On November 10, Sgt. John Harwell patrolled Oconee WMA. Sgt. Harwell issued a citation for failure to record deer harvest on the management area.

Region IV- Macon (West Central)

MUSCOGEE COUNTY

On November 9th, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen responded to an in progress complaint where a landowner heard a shot and caught a poacher on his property field dressing an 8 point buck. The landowner confronted the poacher and stated that the individual pointed a gun at him before walking off. After pursuing the poacher, the landowner stated that the poacher punched him in the face. A picture was taken of the poacher which led to a possible suspect. On November 13th, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen and Cpl. Mitch Oliver interviewed the suspect at his residence. When the officer's arrived in the driveway, they noticed a field dressed buck wrapped in a tarp, laying on the ground. The individual admitted to being at the scene as well as killing another buck on November 12th. The interview led to the individual admitting to killing 3 bucks so far this season. All of the deer were killed with a .17 caliber rifle. The rifle and the deer racks were seized as evidence. The individual received charges for 2 counts of hunting without permission, 2 counts of hunting deer with an illegal weapon, 2 counts of failure to record the deer harvest, and 1 count of taking over the bag limit for bucks. Additionally, Columbus Police Department took out warrants on the individual for pointing a weapon at another and assault.

Region V- Albany (Southwest)

THOMAS COUNTY

On November 8th, while working complaints related to night deer hunting activity, RFC Jon Penuel observed the occupants of a vehicle hunting from the road. Penuel stopped the vehicle and following an investigation, all occupants were charged with hunting deer at night, hunting from a vehicle, hunting from a public road and hunting without permission.

MITCHELL COUNTY

On November 11th, while working complaints related to night deer hunting activity, Ranger Eric White observe the occupants of a pickup truck hunt several fields and wooded areas along the road. Ranger White stopped the truck which was occupied by five subjects. Following his investigation, the subjects were charged for hunting deer at night, hunting big game from a public road, and hunting from a vehicle.

CHATTAHOOCHEE COUNTY

On November 8th, Cpl. Steve Robinson was contacted by the Chattahoochee County Sheriff's Office in reference to a hunting without permission complaint. A Deputy was on scene and had secured two male subjects at a nearby residence. He then advised Cpl. Robinson that one of the subjects was a convicted felon. Cpl. Robinson interviewed the pair which led to the arrest of one subject for possession of a firearm by convicted felon. The second subject was charged for hunting without licenses.

Region VI- Metter (Southeast)

APPLING COUNTY

On the night of November 7th, Cpl. Altman and Sgt. Barnard were working a night hunting complaint in Appling County. One vehicle was stopped for shining a light in a blueberry field. A traffic stop was initiated by Sgt. Barnard and a brief investigation was performed. It was later determined that they were farming the blueberries and were checking the irrigation system.

TATTNALL COUNTY

On November 7, 2015, Ranger First Class Debbie Brannen patrolled a complaint area and checked a hunter. One violation for hunting without a big game license was documented.

EVANS COUNTY

On November 8th, Ranger Brannen worked a night hunting complaint off Highway 280. Ranger Brannen observed a vehicle that was shining a light into some fields. A traffic stop was initiated and violations for hunting deer at night, hunting from a motor vehicle, hunting from a public road, and hunting without permission was documented.

EMANUEL COUNTY

On November 7th, Corporal Mike Wilcox and Ranger Randell Meeks responded to a hunting incident in the Summertown area. The incident involved a self-inflicted gun- shot wound. The victim stated that as he adjusted himself in the seat, his .30-06 rifle fell to the floor of his stand and that it fired as he picked it up. The bullet entered the side and exited the bottom of his foot. The victim was treated at Emanuel Medical Center.

SCREVEN COUNTY

On November 7th 2015, Corporal Mike Wilcox and Ranger Jordan Crawford patrolled Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area for hunting and fishing activity. During the patrol Cpl. Wilcox and Rgr. Crawford checked several hunters and fisherman with one violation being documented for fishing without a license.

On November 14th, Corporal Shaymus McNeely, Corporal Mike Wilcox and Sergeant Don Dasher responded to a hunting incident off Halcyondale Road near Brady Branch. At the scene Rangers determined the victim in the incident had fallen from a tree stand and sustained significant injuries. The victim was transported by ambulance to East GA Regional Medical Center in Statesboro. The victim was not wearing a safety harness.

EFFINGHAM COUNTY

On November 9th 2015, Ranger Jordan Crawford patrolled Effingham County looking for hunting activity. During the patrol he encountered a subject hunting without a license and hunting without a big game license. Both violations were documented.

WARE COUNTY

In the early morning hours on November 13th, Corporal Jason Shipes was contacted by the Ware County Sheriff's Department and asked to assist deputies with a motor vehicle vs. bear accident in the Manor area. Cpl. Shipes learned that a very large black bear had been struck and killed by a tractor trailer. Cpl. Shipes responded to the accident scene and determined that leaving the carcass would create a traffic hazard for morning commuters. With the help of officers at the scene and a large wrecker, the animal was loaded into the bed of Cpl. Shipes' patrol vehicle. Cpl. Shipes contacted wildlife biologist Greg Nelms and met him in Waycross. Once there, they collected data from the bear. The bear weighed 345 pounds with an estimated age of six to seven years old.



345 pound black bear killed by a vehicle in Ware County

On November 14th, Corporal Jason Shipes was conducting surveillance of a field where a number of complaints have been received related to deer poaching activity. Cpl. Shipes observed a vehicle approaching his location as it slowed down and entered the field. Cpl. Shipes observed a high-powered light begin to shine the field, sweeping from side to side as the vehicle slowly passed by. Cpl. Shipes stopped the vehicle and made contact with the driver and passenger. After a brief interview, both were charged with hunting deer at night, hunting from a motor vehicle, and hunting big game from a public road.



Items used by deer poachers in Ware County

CLINCH COUNTY

On November 14th, Sgt. Patrick Dupree was patrolling Olive Leaf highway when he encountered a deer-dog hunting party of several trucks and hunters actively engaged in pursuit of a deer. One of the hunters was observed standing in a county-maintained public road with a loaded shotgun. The violation of hunting big game from a public road was documented.

PIERCE COUNTY & CHARLTON COUNTY

On November 14th, members of the Satilla River-Keeper conducted an organized river landing clean-up day. Sgt. Patrick Dupree, Cpl. Jason Shipes, and Ranger First Class Sam Williams visited with the volunteers at Highway 121 landing in Pierce County and Burnt Fort landing in Charlton County to show their support for the event.

DODGE COUNTY

On November 14th, Ranger First class Allen Mills patrolled Dodge County Public Fishing Area during an archery deer hunt. Safety inspections were conducted on two vessels. Four hunters and five anglers were checked for licenses and regulations compliance. Violations for operating a vessel with improper lights and operating a vessel with expired registration were documented.

IRWIN COUNTY

On November 12th, Corporal John A Stokes investigated a complaint about littering. A person's name and address was found in the trash bags. The person was charged with littering.

WILCOX COUNTY

On November 13th, Sergeant James McLaughlin and Ranger First Class Rodney Horne worked a night hunting detail in Wilcox County. Two persons were arrested and charged with hunting deer at night, hunting from a public road, and hunting from a vehicle.



Equipment of a night hunting poacher

TELFair COUNTY

On November 8th, Ranger First Class Rodney Horne responded to a hunting without permission compliant. RFC Horne conducted an investigation and made contact with the violator. Two counts of hunting without permission and hunting without fluorescent orange were documented.

LAURENS COUNTY

On November 14th, while working a concentrated patrol with several officers, Sergeant James McLaughlin and Corporal Dan Stiles stopped a vehicle after it was observed shining a light into a field. One violation for blinding wildlife with lights was documented.

LOWNDES COUNTY

On November 14th, Ranger First Class Keith McDonald patrolled Grand Bay WMA for hunting activity. Five hunters were checked. No violations were documented.



ATKINSON COUNTY

On November 12th, Corporal Tim Hutto concluded a two week investigation into a subject who had killed two deer without permission in a private hunting club in Axson. One subject was arrested on warrants for hunting without permission, hunting without a license and hunting without a big game license. Two sets of antlers and deer meat were confiscated from the subject.

Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)

CAMDEN COUNTY

On November 11, RFC David Brady was patrolling Camden County for deer dogging activity in the Burnt Fort area. One subject was apprehended running dogs on unpermitted property and cited for the violation.

BRANTLEY COUNTY

On November 14th, RFC John Evans was working a night hunting complaint when he observed a truck start shining the field he was watching. RFC Evans initiated a traffic stop and as he approached the truck he noticed dried blood on the ATV in the back. After a thorough investigation the two occupants were found to be in possession of a 12 volt spotlight, a rechargeable light and a 30-06 rifle. One of the men had killed a 6 point buck earlier that evening and stuffed it under the tool box in front of the ATV out of sight. Evans was able to determine that the buck had not been tagged; both men were charged with Hunting deer at night, Hunting from a vehicle, and Hunting from a public road. The driver was also charged with Failure to record deer harvest.

BRYAN COUNTY

On November 13th, Sgt. Phillip Scott checked the Wilma Edwards Road and Hendrix Road for deer carcasses being unlawfully dumped. There were carcasses being dumped in the area and an investigation is on-going.

CHATHAM COUNTY

On November 9-10, Corporal Kate Hargrove, United States Coast Guard officers and a K9 Unit from Chatham County Sheriff's Office conducted commercial fishing details. Officers boarded three trawlers, inspecting their fishing gear and required safety equipment.

On November 14th, Rangers from Chatham County and Bryan County worked to recover a drowning victim in Salt Creek of Garden City in Chatham County. Witnesses gave a precise location to begin the search. Rangers worked with garden City and Chatham County first responders with sonar and the young man was located.