



# GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Commissioner  
Mark Williams

Director  
Colonel Thomas  
Barnard



Law Enforcement Division  
FY 2022 Annual Report

# Headquarters



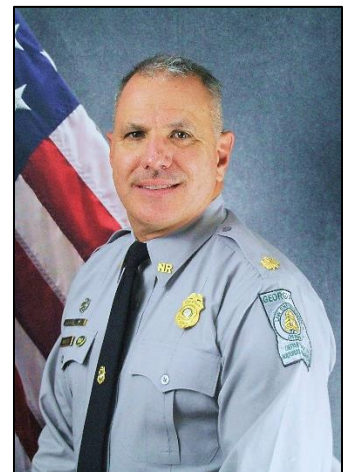
**Colonel Thomas Barnard, Director**



**Lt. Colonel Mike England,  
Assistant Director**



**Major Stephen Adams**



**Major Bob Holley**



# Headquarters Support Staff



**Lt. Wayne Hubbard**



**Lt. Wanda Roberts**



**Lt. Judd Smith**



**Kim Cato**



**Jen Hammonds**



**Jamie Hawkins**



**Mark McKinnon**



**Ashley Moon**



**Taye Pierce**



**Sharon Sims**



**Shannon Witcher**

**The Vision of the Law Enforcement Division is to ensure that Georgia's natural resources will be conserved for our present and future generations.**

**The Mission of the Law Enforcement Division is to conserve our natural resources and to protect the people we serve. We maintain public support through fair and vigorous law enforcement, quality education, and community involvement. We commit ourselves to our Vision and Mission by practicing our core beliefs, which are trust, fairness, and professionalism.**



## **Headquarters**

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement Division, currently has 190 POST-certified Game Wardens with statewide authority and full arrest powers and 26 non-sworn staff members. The primary duties of these Game Wardens are enforcement of all laws and regulations pertaining to hunting, fishing, commercial fishing, environmental violations, and recreational boating, as well as to provide public safety on all our DNR-controlled properties.

The Law Enforcement Division operates with a straight-line chain of command. It consists of the Colonel, Lt. Colonel, two Majors, eight Captains (6 Region Supervisors, 1 Training Director, 1 Pilot), seven Lieutenants (database management, special permits/captive wildlife and wild animals, boating law administrator and administrative support, professional standards, investigations, 2 pilots), and 171 field Game Wardens (Sergeants, Corporals, Game Wardens First Class, and Game Wardens).

## **Vehicles & Equipment**

Throughout the year, the Law Enforcement Division acquired some new vehicles and equipment, utilizing funding from various sources. Ten new 4x4 Ford patrol vehicles, five KIA SUVs, and one UTV for the coastal region were purchased this past year. New equipment included the riot gear and riot gas masks for select personnel. The Division is also updating all the ATVs, adding lights and kill switches.

## **Ranger Hotline**

The Ranger Hotline program, which provides a way for citizens to report anonymously potentially illegal wildlife and other conservation law violations, continues to be successful. If the information leads to an arrest, the tipster receives a cash reward funded by the Georgia Natural Resource Foundation, whose mission is to protect wildlife by increasing public support for wildlife law enforcement. Last year, 320 tips were received for various violations.

## **OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES**

### **Crime Suppression**

This past fiscal year the illegal street racing and crime in the City of Atlanta has improved with the multi-agency crime suppression effort. Governor Brian Kemp initiated this collaborative effort last year between the Department of Natural Resources, Georgia State Patrol, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Atlanta Police Department, Fulton County Sheriff's Office, and the City of South Fulton, to assist in the city on weekends with the objective of cracking down on criminal activity and illegal street racing in and around Atlanta. Since its inception in early 2021, the operation has logged 31,214 vehicle stops, 743 pursuits, 709 DUIs, 589 wanted persons, 558 reckless driving, 159 stolen guns, 21,092 citations/arrests, 1,638 impounded vehicles, 24,363 warnings, and 275 drug arrests. Game Wardens from across the state continue to be deployed on Saturdays and Sundays for this operation.

### **JEA Patrols**

The Joint Agreement #19 between Georgia DNR and NOAA Office of Law Enforcement called for GADNR enforcement personnel to provide a total of 1,604 hours of marine law enforcement or related work under the agreement. Georgia has 5 Execution Priorities. They are Endangered Species, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, National Marine Sanctuaries Act, Marine Mammal Right Whale, and Lacey Act/International (IUU).

Vessel patrol hours targeted the following areas: 1) shrimp trawlers checking for TED compliance, 2) intercepts of recreational and commercial fishing vessels returning to Georgia seaports from fishing trips in federal waters, 3) offshore patrols to Special Management Zones and Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, 4) concentrations of fishing vessels wherever they occur in the Exclusive Economic Zone adjacent to the State of Georgia, 5) intercepts of recreational fishing vessels for Red Snapper compliance, and 6) Inspection of shipping container at the Georgia Ports. These patrols resulted in 6 state charges and 12 Federal Cases sent to NOAA OLE.

## **Public Affairs**

### Media Relations and Public Outreach

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued, media news conferences and ride-alongs with Game Wardens were limited. News releases, radio and TV interviews, and social media posts were the primary information channels for the start of the boating and hunting seasons, “Operation Dry Water,” and the July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday weekend to promote safe boating and swimming safety and to educate citizens on boating laws and how they are applied. Additionally, news releases, I & E presentations and speeches to various civic groups, and regular news media interviews and interaction were utilized throughout the year to disseminate information to the public on the Division’s hunting, fishing, and boating enforcement efforts, and awards and recognitions received by game wardens.

### Social Media

LED manages a Facebook page that is over 76,000 page “Likes” (people who regularly view the page). Many of LED’s Facebook posts have a “Reach” (number of people who may see the post through their friends who “Like” the page) that exceeds 100,000, and occasionally, some are above 500,000. The Division also has an Instagram account with over 7,500 followers, a Twitter account that currently has over 1,700 followers, and a YouTube Channel with multiple safety-related videos that has over 600 subscribers.





### Previous Game Wardens of the Year

|                        |      |                |      |
|------------------------|------|----------------|------|
| William Powell         | 1980 | David Ruddell  | 2001 |
| W.D. Hill, Jr.         | 1981 | Derek Dillard  | 2002 |
| Michael Bone           | 1982 | Mike Barr      | 2003 |
| William Vickers        | 1983 | Harry E. Akins | 2004 |
| Dan Parrish            | 1984 | Eric Brown     | 2005 |
| Ronald Bailey          | 1985 | John Murphy    | 2006 |
| Ralph Sheppard         | 1986 | Shane Sartor   | 2007 |
| Roger D. Garrison      | 1987 | Mike Binion    | 2008 |
| James McDaniel         | 1988 | Brian Hobbins  | 2009 |
| Doug Lewis             | 1989 | Cindy Miller   | 2010 |
| Terry West             | 1990 | Timothy Butler | 2011 |
| W. Howard Hensley, Jr. | 1991 | Jason Roberson | 2012 |
| Dennis Aderholt        | 1992 | David Webb     | 2013 |
| Bill Bunch             | 1993 | Greg Wade      | 2014 |
| Arvid Edwards          | 1994 | Casey Jones    | 2015 |
| Mitchell H. Yeargin    | 1995 | Eddie Tompkins | 2016 |
| Jeff Weaver            | 1996 | Brian Adams    | 2017 |
| Mike Commander         | 1997 | Cody Jones     | 2018 |
| Phillip Scott          | 1998 | Quinn Fogle    | 2019 |
| Stanley Elrod          | 1999 | Ryan Locke     | 2020 |
| Rick Sellars           | 2000 | John Rhodes    | 2021 |



## Region I- Acworth



*Front Row, L to R: GWFC 1 Ryan Shorter, SGT Ben Cunningham, CPL Kalem Burns, GWFC 1 Steven Martinez, CPL Daniel Gray, SGT Keith Waddell, GW 2 Andrew Crider, GW 2 Hunter Bowman, CPL Russell Epps, CAPT James McLaughlin, GW 1 Chandler Traylor, CPL Zack Hardy, GW 2 David Wright, GWFC 1 Travis Shrader, CPL Tyler Lewis, SGT Byron Young, CPL Philip Stout, GW 2 Stetson Stevens, GW 2 Hunter Rush, GW 2 Kyle Faulknor*  
*Back Row, L to R: SGT Bart Hendrix, SGT Eric Brown, GW 2 Bo Townsend, GW 2 Austin Biggers, GW 1 Tim Bledsoe, SGT James Keener, GW 1 Amy King, GWFC 2 Mark Moyer, CPL Roger McConkey, CPL Chad Cox.*  
*Not Pictured: CPL Brock Hoyt, GWFC 1 Charles Follin, GWFC 1 Ryan Thomas, GW 2 Jason Warren, GW Caleb Schacher*

Region I is comprised of 28 Northwest Georgia counties and includes the City of Atlanta and surrounding metro counties. Captain James McLaughlin is the Region Supervisor and Sergeant Bart Hendrix is the Administrative Sergeant. The Administrative Assistant is Joyce Holland and Sherry Rollins fills the Administration support position. Joyce Holland received the Administrative Specialist of the Year Award for the State.

The “Mountain Work Section” is comprised of Catoosa, Gilmer, Gordon, Murray, Pickens, and Whitfield Counties. Section assignments are as follows: GW Travis Shrader – Catoosa, Cpl. Kalem Burns – Gilmer, Cpl. Roger McConkey – Gordon, GW Ryan Thomas – Murray, GW Caleb Schacher – Pickens, GW David Wright – Whitfield, GW Hunter Rush – Fort Mt. State Park, and supervisory Sgt. James Keener. The section covers a vast area of both state owned or controlled properties as well as large expanses of National Forest Lands. Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in the section include Rich Mt., Cartecay Tract, Cohutta, Coosawattee, Carter’s Lake Tract, Conasauga River, John’s Mt., and McEntire VPA. Wardens also patrol the section’s main body of water, Carter’s Lake, as well as many other smaller impoundments, rivers, and creeks. State Parks and Historic Sites in the section include Fort Mt., Chief Vann House, New Echota, and Resaca Battlefield.

GW Roger McConkey was promoted to Cpl. and transferred from Chattooga County to Gordon County. GW Kalem Burns was promoted to Cpl. in Gilmer County. GW Mark Moyer transferred from Whitfield to Chattooga County. GW David Wright transferred to Whitfield County. GW Hunter Rush transferred to Fort Mt. State Park. GW Caleb Schacher was assigned to Pickens County with the resignation of GW Will Smith.





*(Left) Cpl. Kalem Burns and a Pickens County Deputy with a deer that was shot from the road. (Right) Corporals Kalem Burns and Roger McConkey and Captain Turner after an extraction on Lake Russell WMA.*



*Deer mounts taken during an investigation where multiple Georgia residents committed hunting violations in Kentucky.*



*GW Mark Moyer was presented with the Elk's Lodge State Award for Public Safety Officer of the Year.*

Sergeant Eric Brown supervises the Counties of Haralson, Paulding, Douglas, Carroll, Coweta, and Fulton. The Game Wardens assigned to the section are Corporals Daniel Gray and Zack Hardy, GWs Brock Hoyt and Ryan Shorter with GW Chandler Traylor joining the section after graduating the academy in June. GW Garrett Pownall resigned and took a job with the fire department.

Cpl. Daniel Gray was the recipient of the Georgia DNR National Wild Turkey Federation Officer of the Year this past year. During his regular duties, Cpl. Gray worked on an extensive investigation stemming from one individual that harvested over his limit of gobblers for that season. During the investigation Game Wardens discovered that three other individuals had failed to record their deer harvest in 2020 and one individual had failed to record his turkey harvest in 2021, all four individuals were cited for the violations. 19 total violations were discovered during the investigation.

GW Brock Hoyt was recipient of the TORCH award and named International Crime Stoppers Game Warden of the Year and was recognized in Vermont for his achievements.

Sgt. Eric Brown and Game Warden Ryan Shorter hosted the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Carroll County Outdoor Camp. During this camp, youth between the ages of 13-16 had the opportunity to experience various outdoor activities. Youths received instruction and had the opportunity to get their Hunter Safety Certificate and their Boat Georgia Certificate. Students were also taught how to safely use various types of firearms and bows and learn about various types of watercrafts. The camp was a great success and a big thanks to Carrollton Parks and REC, Carroll County Sheriff's office, Carrollton PD, Carroll County Fire and Rescue and all the volunteers for their help. This past camp was in Honor of Deputy Chief Tommy Hopson, who was missed deeply this year. Not only was he the heart and soul of the camp, but a great instructor and a passionate outdoorsman. Rest easy friend!





Sergeant Keith Waddell's section consists of Meriwether, Troup, Heard, Pike, Fayette, Spalding, Henry, and Clayton Counties. The Game Wardens in this work unit patrol West Point Lake along with sections of the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers. Several state-owned properties are also located within the work section including 3 Wildlife Management Areas, and 2 State Parks. Game Wardens assigned to this work unit are, Game Warden Charles Follin, Game Warden Austin Biggers, Game Warden Hunter Bowman, Corporal Russell Epps, and Game Warden Bo Townsend.

Game Warden First Class Austin Biggers has been assigned to Pike County since June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This year GW Biggers has completed training to become a Defensive Tactics Instructor for the Department. On 02/14/2022, Game Warden Austin Biggers was notified of an incident regarding



an unlawfully possessed raccoon. The subject contacted the Region 1 Wildlife Resources Division office and informed them that they were in possession of a raccoon with a possible injury but would not divulge their address. Game Warden Austin Biggers was able to gather the provided information and work with the DNR investigative unit to identify the subject's address. On 02/17/2022, Game Warden Austin Biggers and WRD Technician Matthew Leo responded to the subject's address and seize the unlawfully held Raccoon. The animal was taken to AWARE Wildlife Center for rehabilitation.



Game Warden Hunter Bowman completed the Game Warden academy in July 2020 and is currently assigned to Troup County. In 2022, Game Warden Bowman was nominated and received the Region 1 nomination for Investigation Game Warden of the Year Award due to a notable case included a lengthy investigation involving a commercial trash collection truck dumping and egregious amount of waste on private property. He was able to identify and arrest two individuals for misdemeanor high and aggravated dumping charges.







Game Warden Bo Townsend transferred to the section in November 2021. Since that time GW Townsend was nominated and received the Region 1 awards for Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award and the Region 1 Torch award. Notable cases made include 9 persons apprehended for hunting deer at night (25 total hunting deer at night related charges). Pictured left is GW Townsend with a Whitetail Buck he seized in a hunting deer at night case.

Corporal Russell Epps was promoted to Corporal during the year and is assigned to Heard County. He is currently a member of the Critical Incident Reconstruction Team and is a certified POST Instructor. At the academy, Corporal Epps teaches Emergency Vehicle Operations, Use of Force, Wildlife, and officer Water Survival. Pictured right is Game Wardens working crowd control at the West Point Lake Dragon Boat Race.



Sergeant Ben Cunningham supervises the Counties of Dade, Walker, Chattooga, Floyd, and Polk. During the last year, Cpl. Daniel Gray (Floyd County), GWFC Stetson Stevens (Dade County), and GWFC Mark Moyer (Chattooga County) joined the work section. GWFC Andrew Crider became part of the new DNR LED recruiting team.

GWFC Kyle Faulknor worked hard on Johns Mountain WMA during this period, which netted him multiple felony drug cases. GWFC Stevens made 12 cases on the new Charles B. Henson VPA during turkey season. He confiscated two illegally killed birds during his patrols there. Cpl. Chad Cox apprehended and arrested a repeat offender in Floyd County during deer season. The subject was charged with possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, possession of meth, and hunting deer w/o orange.

Cpl. Byron Young, who transferred due to being promoted, and Sgt. Ben Cunningham received a hunting complaint during deer season. During their investigation, game wardens were able to locate the rifles the convicted felons had hidden. The hunters were charged with possession of firearms by convicted felons, hunting w/o a license, hunting w/o a big game license, and hunting deer w/o orange.

GWFC Stevens completed the following training: DRE Training, Defensive Tactics Instructor Training, Alert Instructor, Taser Instructor, Gas Mask Instructor, and began CIRT Training. Cpl. Chad Cox was the Region 1 Hunter Education Officer of the Year. GWFC Faulknor was Dade/Trenton's DNR law enforcement recipient at the Optimist Club's Annual Awards Banquet, and GW Carla Gann resigned from LED.

Byron Young was promoted to Sergeant and supervises the Allatoona section of the Region which includes Lake Allatoona, and the Counties of Bartow, Cherokee and Cobb. The section includes Corporals Tyler Lewis and Phillip Stout and Game Wardens Steven Martinez and Jason Warren. Tim Bledsoe and Amy King joined the ranks after graduating the Academy in June.



*Illegally taken bucks seized by Corporal Tyler Lewis for a night hunting case. The investigation concluded with a total of 34 violations including: 7 separate cases of hunting without permission, hunting without a license and hunting without a big game license, 4 cases of hunting deer at night, hunting from a public road and hunting from a motor vehicle and 1 case of failure to record harvest.*

Corporal Tyler Lewis was named the James Darnell Award winner and Corporal Phillip Stout was named the Boating Officer of the Year for the State.

Game Warden Steven Martinez and Cpl. Tyler Lewis witnessed an overloaded vessel capsize on Lake Allatoona. They were able to quickly get to the boat and began throwing flotation to the people in the water and began getting them onto their boat. All eight people on board, including small children and a dog were rescued. If it weren't for the actions of Game Warden Martinez and Cpl. Lewis, the situation would have ended a lot worse for the family.



## Region II- Gainesville



*Front Row, L-R: Sgt. Casey Jones, GW Cody Tanner, GW Adam Kimbrough, Cpl. Shane Brown, Cpl. Craig Fulghum, Sgt. Adam Loudermilk, GW TR Dooley, GW Savannah Miller, GW Matt Kiracofe, Captain Derek Dillard, GW Bryan Price, GW Ethan Franklin, GW Phillip Nelson, GW Jason Harrison, Sgt. Cody Jones, GW Spencer Palmer, Cpl. Anne Wiley.  
Back Row, L-R: Sgt. Jason Roberson, GW Ryan Locke, GW Kevin Goss, Cpl. Tim Butler, GW Brandon Pierce, GW Noah Osborne, GW Joseph Cowart, Cpl. Matt Johnson, GW Taylor Gilmore, Cpl. Joe Hill, GW Jeffery Turner, Sgt. Brooks Varnell.  
Not pictured: AOC Brenda Tanner, Secretary Tasha Lamb, Cpl. Dan Schay, Cpl. Beth Gilbert, Sgt. Tim Vickery, GW Jared Wood, GW Mark Stephens*

The Gainesville Region is comprised of 26 Northeast Georgia Counties which include part of the metro Atlanta area. Within these counties are 10 major impoundments, three major rivers, 16 Wildlife Management Areas, 220 miles of trout streams, 23 State Park Properties, and 328,500 acres of National Forest lands.

### Lake Lanier

The Lake Lanier work section is comprised of Hall, Forsyth, Jackson, and Banks counties and all of Lake Sidney Lanier. The Section members include Game Warden First Class Ryan Locke, Game Warden First Class Kevin Goss, Game Warden Adam Kimbrough, Corporal Beth Gilbert, Corporal Dan Schay, Sgt. Jason Roberson, and newly hired Game Warden Cody Tanner. The section has continued to be very busy where it has worked 6 drownings, 32 boating incidents, two of which were fatalities, and produced more than one hundred arrests for boating under the influence during this period.

### Dawson County

In April of 2022 Game Wardens Ryan Locke, Savannah Miller, Kevin Goss, and Adam Kimbrough partnered with Dawson County High School's Ag Mechanics Class to construct Wood Duck Boxes. The officers met with the students at War Hill Park to set the boxes in select areas of the lake.





## Hall County



In December of 2021 Game Warden Ryan Locke received a tip that a potential county record buck had been killed possibly without permission. He responded to the area with Game Warden Goss and began an investigation. They located the area that the deer had been killed in and were able to determine that the hunter had indeed trespassed without permission and killed the deer. The property that he had permission to hunt was only  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre and had a yard that was entirely fenced in with a six-foot privacy fence. The hunter pled guilty to hunting without permission and hunting over bait.

In May of 2022 Game Wardens Locke, Kimbrough, and Roberson were patrolling Lake Lanier when they each smelled a strong odor of marijuana as a boat passed by their location. They also noticed that the boat was not displaying registration. The occupants of the vessel began to act suspiciously, and the Wardens stopped the vessel to address the registration and to conduct a safety inspection. During the inspection, they continued to smell a strong odor of marijuana and a passenger in the front of the boat became nervous. After a brief conversation, the passenger handed a backpack that contained more than one pound of marijuana to the officers. He was charged with felony possession of Marijuana.



On 12/09/2021, GWFC Ethan Franklin and Cpl. Joe Hill responded to a Habersham County, hunting without permission complaint. Upon arrival, a subject was observed at his truck with a white tail buck laying in the bed of the vehicle. After a brief investigation, the subject was identified as the one hunting without permission. He also had an active warrant for his arrest, he was a convicted felon who was in possession of two firearms (rifle and pistol), and he was in possession of methamphetamine and drug related objects. The suspect was arrested on the warrant and charged with hunting without permission, failure to record deer harvest, hunting deer without fluorescent orange, possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug related objects, and two counts of possession of firearm by convicted felon. GW Jared Wood arrived on scene with K-9 Judge and they tracked up the suspect's hunting partner. After Game Wardens observed the hunter's behavior, GW Wood put him through SFSTs, which resulted in his arrest for hunting under the influence. The hunter was also charged for hunting deer without fluorescent orange.



On October 2, Sgt. Tim Vickery, Cpl. Joe Hill, GWFC Ethan Franklin, and GWFC Jared Wood conducted a wildlife checkpoint on Chattahoochee WMA during the dog/bear hunt. The Game Wardens dealt with several hunting violations at the checkpoint. During the checkpoint, Game Wardens heard gunshots up the road from their location. Looking down the road approximately 100 yards, they observed a group of hunters, that just came through the checkpoint, standing on the side of the road shooting a firearm at a bear. Two citations were issued for hunting within 50 yards of a WMA road. Later in the week of the Chattahoochee WMA bear/dog hunt, Cpl. Anne Wiley responded to a complaint of hunters running bear on Smithgall Woods State Park. Cpl. Wiley charged two subjects with criminal trespass on a state park.

Cpl. Kevin Godbee received a complaint of Great Blue Herons being shot and killed in Newton County. Cpl. Godbee contacted U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and began investigating the case. After obtaining evidence and interviewing the suspect with USFW agents, the suspect was charged with the taking of a protected species and theft by taking wildlife.



GW Taylor Gilmore received a picture of a possible illegal buck on Facebook. Gilmore interviewed the suspect and was able to prove the buck was taken from an affidavit property in Gwinnett County. She also found that the suspect's girlfriend had also shot a deer on the same day in the same location. She walked the Gwinnett County property and found the kill sites, blood trails, as well as tire tracks where the truck pulled in to load the deer. Through the investigation, Gilmore found out that the suspect was hunting without permission on a property that had an affidavit on it. Later in the evening, the suspect's girlfriend came to pick him up when they saw a buck across the road on the same property in the power cut. They pulled the truck up into the power cut and the girlfriend shot the second deer right before dark. She was able to bring several charges against both subjects which included hunting without permission, theft by taking of wildlife, hunting without orange, recording, and reporting requirements, and both deer were confiscated.

In Fannin County, Cpl. Cody Jones completed an investigation, 4/14/20 – 9/3/21, and issued eight arrest warrants for a North Carolina resident with two counts of non-resident license, two counts non-resident hunting without a big game license, two counts of hunting without permission, one count of hunting turkey over bait, and one count of possession of big game without a big game license. The suspect also had outstanding warrants from Fannin County. Cpl. Jones and GW Jeffery Turner seized a turkey beard, spurs, and six bear claws during a search warrant.

Cpl. Cody Jones completed an investigation with 46 violations that include harvest record violations, hunting big game over bait, hunting without orange, hunting without permission, taking over the limit of turkeys, theft by taking, interference w/ gov property, criminal trespass, and hunting turkey out of season. Cpl. Jones, Sgt. Casey Jones, and GW Bryan Price seized seven turkey beards, a stolen U.S. Forest Service sign, a stolen trail camera SD card, and two deer racks during a search warrant of a residence.





Cpl. Cody Jones also completed an investigation that resulted in four search warrants being served for multiple suspects' Snap Chat accounts, phone data, residence, and illegal deer processor's residence. A total of nine suspects were charged with eighty-two violations, in three Georgia Counties. Three of those suspects were also charged in Illinois with eleven additional violations, stemming from evidence that was turned over from Georgia. Game Wardens seized fifteen deer racks, one turkey, one U.S. Forest Service sign, and a one taxidermized owl.



On February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Cpl. Shane Brown was called to assist the Lumpkin County Sheriff's Office with a stolen boat. It was discovered the boat was stolen out of Hall County on Lake Lanier. The HIN number was replaced with a HIN from a different manufacture and much older boat. The subject also changed the decals to match the replaced HIN. The subject had been arrested two times within a 3-month period for stolen items and was arrested again that day by Lumpkin County Investigators and Cpl. Brown.

On September 13, 2021, Game Warden First Cass Jeffery Turner was checking an area on United States Forest Service property in Union County. While checking the area GW Turner located an area that had been baited. The baited area consisted of pits in the ground filled with grain and covered with heavy logs, and liquid attractant in jugs hanging from tree limbs about 6-7 foot off the ground. After locating the hunters and interviewing them about the bait site, both individuals were charged with illegal baiting of bears.



On November 23, 2021, Game Warden First Class Jeffery Turner was checking the online harvest record system for deer harvested in Towns County. While looking at the report GWFC Turner noticed where two hunters had bought the proper license and minutes later had game checked two 8-point bucks. After a brief investigation and interview with the two subjects it was found that the two deer were harvested before the proper license were obtained. Both individuals were charged with Hunting without a license, and Hunting without a big game license. Both 8-point bucks where confiscated.

On November 27, 2021, CPL. Shane Brown and GWFC Jeffery Turner were working a night hunting complaint in the northern part of Union County. While working the complaint both game wardens observed a vehicle using the headlights of the vehicle to illuminate the fields on both sides of the road. Game Warden Turner performed a traffic stop on the vehicle. After a short investigation both subject of the vehicle was charged with, hunting deer at night, hunting from a motor vehicle, and hunting big game at night.





On February 12, 2022, Game Warden First Class Jeffery Turner received a phone call from Towns County 911 in reference to a black bear that had possibly been shot. Once on scene GWFC Turner located and assessed the kill site. He located a crossbow bolt with dried blood on the shaft and broad head. GWFC Turner also located a blood trail that led back to a residence. After contacting the suspect at the residence, he conducted a short investigation, and the suspect was charged with taking of bear out of season.

On December 4th, 2021, GWFC Matt Johnson, GWFC Jeffery Turner and Sgt Casey Jones participated in a joint night hunting detail with North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission. This multi-state effort was a result of several complaints in both states. GWFC Johnson overserved a vehicle shine a field that is partially in both states. After North Carolina finished their investigation, GWFC Johnson conducted his investigation. They were each issued citations for hunting big game from a public road, hunting from a motor vehicle, hunting deer at night, and non-resident hunting without a license.

On April 2nd, Sgt. Casey Jones and Cpl. Cody Jones came to assist GWFC Matt Johnson with a baited area. Two subjects were located with a freshly killed turkey. It was also discovered that a turkey was killed during youth season, over bait by one of the subjects' sons. GWFC Johnson executed search warrants on both subject's phones. As a result, 24 charges were taken in Fannin and Union Counties. These include but are not limited to hunting big game over bait, unlawful enticement, taking over the season bag limit of deer, theft by taking wildlife, trapping without a license, several hunting license violations, and harvest recording violations.



During deer season GWFC Savannah Miller arrested a convicted felon when she located him hunting on Army Corps of Engineers property on Lake Lanier. The suspect was charged for hunting without permission, hunting without a hunting license and hunting without a big game license, hunting without 500 square inches of daylight fluorescent orange, and convicted felon in possession of a firearm.



On 03/13/2022 Game Warden First Class Bryan Price and Sgt. Casey Jones received a fishing complaint located in Dawson County on the Amicalola Creek delayed harvest section. Upon arrival 3 individuals were located and charged for possession of trout in a delayed harvest stream, using illegal bait in an artificial only stream and fishing without license on persons.

On May 2021 Game Warden First Class Bryan Price was requested by Dawson County Sheriff's Office and Dawson County Fire and EMS to assist in a search and rescue for two Male individuals that were lost and stranded while attempting to float from Hwy 9 Bridge downstream to the Kelly Bridge boat launch on the Etowah River in Dawson County. GSP aviation was used to fly the stretch of river using FLIR to quickly locate the lost kayakers. Once located Game Warden price along with Dawson County S.O. personnel were able to use their ATVs to navigate through the dense and steep terrain. Price contacted the kayakers but due to the very steep riverbank and deep-water depth in the area. The cold and tired kayakers could not get out on their own. Game Warden Price took off his duty belt and climbed down the steep embankment and get in the river to catch

the individuals one at a time from going further downstream with no lights. The first kayakers were an older male that had extensive health issues and was suffering from onset hypothermia. Game Warden Price helped lift the older gentleman up the bank and quickly got the wet shirt off the gentleman and gave him his shirts to dry off with and to wear while a Deputy took him to Game Warden Price's Truck where he could use the heat and other jackets to get his core body temperature up. Game Warden Price then repeated the same process with the other kayaker. Both kayakers were quickly taken using Game Warden Price's patrol truck back to the main road where EMS was staged at for medical evaluation. Both kayakers were released with no injuries and taken back to their vehicles after warming up.

On the night of November 28, 2021, GWFC Brandon Pierce received a call the Hart County Sheriff's Office that a deputy had a vehicle from a night deer hunting complaint stopped and wanted him to respond. When GWFC Pierce arrived, he interviewed the subject, and it was determined from his investigation that the subject had indeed shot at a deer from the road that night and he had also shot a 7-point buck and two doe deer the previous day. Also, GWFC Pierce found out that the subject was a convicted felon. GWFC Pierce took warrants and arrested the subject where he was charged with two counts of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, hunting without a license, hunting without a big-game license, two counts of recording and reporting requirements of game animals, hunting from a vehicle, hunting from a public road, and hunting deer at night.

On December 11, 2021, GWFC Phillip Nelson received a call in Oglethorpe County regarding two subjects hunting without permission. GWFC Nelson responded to the area but they two subjects were already gone. The following the day the same landowner called him again and said the same two subjects were back on his property hunting and that they were in the process of stealing his camera. GWFC Nelson responded back to the location and located a vehicle coming out of the powerline behind the property. When he was talking to the subject in the vehicle, he noticed a ground blind in the back seat, and he told GWFC Nelson who the two guys he got it from were. GWFC Nelson asked him to call the two guys and tell them to meet them there at his truck which they did. It was determined through GWFC Nelson's investigation that the two men were the ones hunting without permission the day before and that day and that they had also stolen the ground blind, two chairs and a camera from that location belonging to the landowner. The two subjects were arrested and charged with hunting without permission, hunting without wearing fluorescent orange, hunting without a license, hunting without a big game license and theft by taking.



Region 2 Game Wardens have participated in the Atlanta Street Racing and Crime Detail alongside the Georgia State Patrol for the past year.



## Region III- Thomson

The Region III Law Enforcement Division is comprised of twenty-eight counties from East Central Georgia to the Piedmont. Within the region, there are twenty-three Wildlife Management Areas, 3 VPS's (voluntary public access), nine State Parks, three Public Fishing Areas, three Public Dove Fields. Region III is home to Clarks Hill Lake, Lake Sinclair, Lake Juliette, Lake Tobesofkee, Lake Jackson, and Lake Oconee. River systems include the Savannah River, Ogeechee River, Oconee River, Apalachee River, and the Ohoopee river. 31 post certified Game Wardens, one Administrative Assistant and a secretary are assigned to the region.



*Capt. Doyte Chaffin, Elizabeth Bentley,  
Raine Rowell, Sgt. John Harwell*

### Personnel Awards

GW Levi Thompson became a member of DNR, LED Peer Support and Sonar Team.

GW Saxon Campbell became a member of the CIRT Team and was called to assist with boating incidents in Savannah and Lake Tobesofkee.

GW Taylor Bingham became a member of the SOG Team and Sonar Team.

GW Taylor Brown became a member of the Sonar Team.

Cpl. Ricky Boles was selected as the Region III's Game Warden of the Year.

Cpl. Jeff Billips was selected as the State Hunter Education Instructor of the Year and completed the Daniel Defense DD M4 Armorer School as well as Glock Armorer School as part of his collateral duties as a firearms instructor.

GW Kyle Kervin graduated with the awards for highest academic average during the Wildlife Segment as well as the "Top Gun" Award during firearms training.

GW Cory Bohannon served as Vice President for the 36<sup>th</sup> Game Warden Academy.

GW Skyler Redmond became a member of the Sonar Team.

Cpl. David Fisher was Region III's Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl award recipient which is his 2<sup>nd</sup> time receiving this award as he was the state award winner in 2020. He also completed all 10 modules of PMP.

GW Jason Bennett completed Firearm's Instructor training in August 2022.

Cpl. Jonathan Segars completed Field Training Officer class and SONAR training.

GW Erin McDade was selected by the Command Staff to assist with Game Warden recruitment.

GW Lamar Burns completed Field Training Officer class and SONAR training and was selected by the Command Staff to assist with Game Warden recruitment.



## In the Community

Cpl. Bobby Timmerman, Cpl. Shane Sartor and GW Saxon Campbell assisted with a Safety Day at the Columbia County Fair Grounds.

Cpl. Bobby Timmerman, GW Saxon Campbell, and GW Levi Thompson participated in an Emergency Preparedness Day in Columbia County.

Cpl. Bobby Timmerman, GW Saxon Campbell and PIO Mark McKinnon participated in career day at Georgia Military College.



Cpl. Derrell Worth and the rest of his work section maintain positive community relations through their involvement with outdoor and educational programs. This past year, the Lake Oconee Work Section taught boating safety enforcement to a group of Greene County Deputies, taught boater ed at Lake Oconee Academy and Morgan County High School. They participated in community events such as the Warren County Sportsman's Festival, Faith and Blue event, Georgia Power public interaction meeting, Georgia Farm Bureau Safety Day, and the Morgan County Jr. Deputy Camp. Pictured is Cpl. Worth assisting a youth with archery at Black Dog Farm in Morgan County during an outdoor adventure day.

Cpl. Jeff Billips planned and executed the annual Glascock County Kids Fishing Event which includes all Elementary age school children over the course of 5 days.



GW Lamar Burns and Erin McDade attended the FFA Trade Show in Macon in April 2022. They talked with over 700 middle and high school students from all over Georgia about becoming a Game Warden.

Governor Brian Kemp and First Lady Marty Kemp, along with Commissioner Williams, visited the Law Enforcement and Wildlife Resources booths at the Turkeyrama/Fisharama at the Georgia National Fairgrounds in February 2022.



### **Helping Hand**

Cpl. Bobby Timmerman assisted Savannah P.D. with a 3-day Standardized Field Sobriety Class sponsored by Grovetown Police Department. This class certified Officers in Field Sobriety from several agencies in and surrounding Columbia County.

GW Taylor Bingham arrested and charged one subject for DUI on a complaint at Elijah Clark State Park.

Sgt. Carters section worked numerous complaints of alcohol consumption at the beach areas on our parks. Surveillance details were utilized. These details resulted in several violations being documented.

On October 19th, Sgt. Carter and GW Levi Thompson, along with Columbia County SO investigated 1 suicide that occurred on Mistletoe State Park.

On February 18th, GW Levi Thompson conducted a welfare check on an individual that was staying at Mistletoe State Park. GW Thomson found the person deceased. The incident was turned over to GBI for further investigation.

GWs assisted the Twiggs County SO with “Operation Wrong Exit” on I-16. Over 2 dozen agencies assisted as part of the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety enforcement efforts during the St. Patrick’s Day weekend celebration. GWs were tasked with surveillance along the wood line which was instrumental in making several felony drug cases as well as vehicles swapping drivers and open container violations.

### **Hunting & Fishing Activity**

On October 19th, GW Taylor Bingham responded and investigated 1 tree stand fall that occurred on Mistletoe Road in Columbia County. The fall resulted in a fatality.

On December 19<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Shane Sartor responded and investigated 1 tree stand fall in Wilkes County. The subject miss stepped and fell causing injuries to his back and shoulder.

On May 7<sup>th</sup>, GW Saxon Campbell received a tip in reference to subjects taking over the limit and undersized stripers on the Savannah River below dam. The investigation led to the apprehension of 4 subjects. The subjects were charged with numerous violations.

Cpl. Ricky Boles most notable wildlife cases this year stem from night hunting activity. Ricky spent 30 nights working night hunting activity, devoting 121 hours to night hunting complaints. As a result, Cpl. Boles led his work section and region in night hunting activity. He apprehended 14 individuals that were violating wildlife laws related to night hunting and road hunting.





In June 2022, Cpl. Payne received an anonymous phone call of several individuals were trying to load a large alligator into the back of a white pick-up truck near the Lock and Dam. Payne being 55 miles away quickly contacted the sheriff's office and had a deputy respond. Once on scene the deputy located the alligator but the violator's fled on foot. After a short time searching the driver of the truck was detained and questioned. Payne cited him for killing an alligator out of season and later charged another individual for the same crime.

Cpl. Ben Payne and GW Kyle Kervin investigated a fishing without permission complaint. Upon receipt of the complaint the GW's located a likely area of access to the property and utilized a concealed camera to document several return trips by the suspect. The subject was caught exiting the property with his Kayak and fishing gear and was charged with fishing without permission.

In January 2022, Cpl. Payne was working duck hunting activity in Washington County. After locating a duck shoot, Cpl. Payne checked licenses and investigated the swamp. Upon entering the swamp he located a trail camera and corn on the swamp bottom. There were also pictures of the individuals hunting on the camera. Citation's were written for hunting waterfowl over bait and one citation for illegal enticement.

On February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022, GW Redmond received a fishing w/o permission complaint where the landowner saw several individuals fishing on his property. The landowner told the subjects that no one had permission to be on the property and left. The daughter of the landowner drove by the pond a few minutes later and the subjects were still there fishing. GW Redmond arrived on scene and issued a fishing w/o permission citation.

Cpl. David Fisher discussing a baited area with a hunter on Opening Day of the 2022 turkey season. It was determined the hunter was unaware of the bait and the landowner took full responsibility and received a citation for the offense.

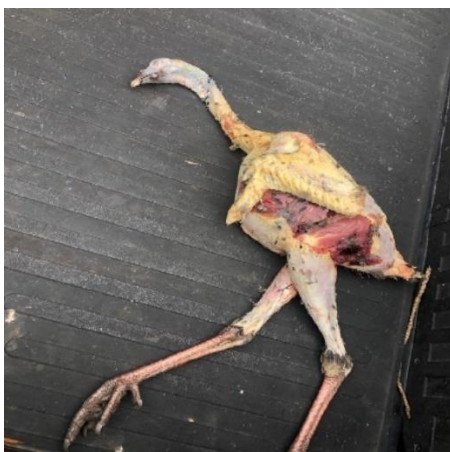






On December 24, 2021, GW Kevin Hurley patrolled south Houston County for waterfowl activity. He heard numerous shots coming from a swamp just across the line in Pulaski County. He called for assistance and GW's Lamar Burns, Jason Bennett and Sgt. Bubba Stanford responded. Nine hunters were apprehended and were in possession of 1 goose, 2 green wing teal and 9 wood ducks. Whole kernel corn was in the pond and 7 adult hunters were charged for hunting waterfowl over bait.

On November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Cpl. Keith Page responded to a night hunting complaint in Monroe County. Upon arriving Page interviewed witnesses and used his K9 "Rio" to locate evidence (spent buckshot shells and blood). Page and Deputies from the Monroe County SO located two men on a side by side in the area and after an investigation Page found deer blood and hair in the back of the ATV. The investigation revealed that the two men shot a deer from the roadway, chased it into an adjacent field while continuing to shoot at the deer multiple times. The suspects then loaded the deer on to the ATV and took it to their nearby residence where they threw a tactical semi-automatic shotgun into some bushes and proceeded to remove the backstraps from the deer. Page found the backstraps from the deer hid in a trash bag and shoved into a 5-gallon bucket. After confronting the suspects with the evidence, both suspects admitted to hunting deer at night, hunting from a public road, hunting from a motorized vehicle and illegal dumping of a deer carcass.



On October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, GW Westin Rabon, received a call from Jasper County Communications of possible hunting without permission complaint. The Complaint advised me that earlier that morning while she was in the deer stand, she heard a shot that sounded like it was on her property. She located the subjects on an adjoining piece of property and asked if they had shot. They advised her that they shot at a deer on their property but couldn't find it. Upon my arrival, I interviewed the suspects, and they told me the same thing they told the complainant. I asked the two individuals to show me where they were hunting. They lead me to a ground blind on their property where they hunted that morning. It was not near the property line of the complainant. As we were walking back to the truck, I noticed a pile of turkey

feathers about 50 yards to the right of the ground blind. After a brief investigation with the two individuals, I discovered that one of them shot a hen turkey earlier that morning and lied about shooting at a deer. They hid the turkey in a corn sack beside a creek on the property when they discovered that I was enroute. I confiscated the turkey and charged the two individuals with Hunting Out of Season, Hunting Without Orange, and a Non-Resident Hunting Without a License.

## Region II-Thomson Game Wardens



*Cpl. Jeff Billips, GW Skyler Redmond, GW Kyle Kervin, Sgt. Mark Patterson (Cpl. Ben Payne not pictured)*



*Sgt. Brian Carter, Cpl. Shane Sartor, Cpl. Bobby Timmerman, GW Saxon Campbell, GW Levi Thompson, GW Taylor Bingham (GW Taylor Brown not pictured)*



*Sgt. Matt Garthright, GW Cory Bohannon, Cpl. Derrell Worth, Cpl. Ricky Boles*



*GW Lamar Burns, GW Jason Bennett, GW Erin McDade, Sgt. Bubba Stanford, Cpl. David Fisher, Cpl. Jonathan Segars*



*Sgt. Travis Sweat, GW David Webb, GW. Kevin Hurley, GW Westin Rabon, Cpl. Wil Smith, GW Bryan Gresham, Cpl. Keith Page, (GW Niki Spencer not pictured)*



## Region IV- Metter



*Left to right: Cpl. Clint Jarriel, GW Evans Nobles, GW Jack Corbett, Cpl. Mike Wilcox, Sgt. Clint Martin, Sgt. Shaymus McNeely, Cpl. Rodney Horne, Sgt. Chris Moore, Cpl. Robert Stillwell, GW Randell Meeks, Cpl. Patrick Gibbs, GW Jordan Usher, GW John Kennedy, Cpl. Jordan Crawford, GW Jack Thain, Sgt. Morty Wood, Cpl. Cameron Dyal, GW Connor Moon, GW Dylan Brady, GW Bryan Gresham*

Region IV “The Metter Region” covers 27 counties in the Coastal Plains of Georgia and consists of mainly farmland, stands of planted pine trees and hardwood bottoms that feed the slow-moving large rivers of southeast Georgia. Region IV Game Wardens patrol over 121,000 acres of public land that includes twenty-five state properties that are operated by the Department of Natural Resources, multiple VPA properties and the public dove fields on Department of Corrections properties in Tattnall County. Region IV Game Wardens also patrol many miles of public waters that make up the mighty Altamaha and Savannah Rivers and their tributaries.

### Personnel

#### Office Staff

The Metter office personnel, pictured to the right, consist of Captain Bob Lynn, Administrative Assistant 3 April Thrift, Administrative Support 1 Christina Colquitt, and Administrative Sergeant Kevin Joyce.



#### Field Staff

Sergeant Shaymus McNeely’s section: Corporal Mike Wilcox, Corporal Jordan Crawford, GWFC Jason Miler, GWFC Jack Thain and K-9 Case and GW Jack Corbett

Sergeant Chris Moore’s section: Corporal Patrick Gibbs, Corporal Clint Jarriel, GWFC Bobby Sanders, GWFC Randell Meeks, GW Jordan Usher and GW Bryan Gresham.

Sergeant Clint Martin’s section: Corporal Rodney Horne, Corporal Robert Stillwell, GW Connor Moon, and GW Evan Nobles

Sergeant Morty Wood’s section: Corporal Tim Hutto and K-9 Titan, Corporal Cameron Dyal. GW John Kennedy, GW Luke Rabun and GW Dylan Brady



### **Personnel Changes**

Region IV welcomed new Wardens from the 36th Game Warden Academy to the Region:

- Bryan Gresham – Appling County
- Jack Corbett - Emanuel County
- Dylan Brady – Tift County

### **Transfers Out**

- Sergeant James McLaughlin promoted to Captain in Region I
- Corporal Chase Altman promoted from Appling County to Sergeant in Region VI
- GW Bo Townsend transferred to Region I

### **Transfer In**

- Clint Martin promoted from Corporal in Region V to Sergeant to fill Sgt. McLaughlin's position
- Robert Stillwell promoted to Corporal in Bleckley County from Region III

### **Promotions**

- GWFC Clint Jarriel promoted to Corporal in Tattnall County
- GWFC Cameron Dyal promoted from Jeff Davis to Corporal in Bacon County

### **Retirements**

- Corporal Dan Stiles from Laurens County

### **Region Personnel Awards**

- Corporal Patrick Gibbs nominated for GW of the Year
- Corporal Clint Jarriel nominated for Game Warden Hunter Ed Instructor of the Year
- Corporal Clint Jarriel nominated for Boating Safety GW of the Year
- GW Jordan Usher nominated for Waterfowl Award
- GW Jordan Usher nominated for TORCH Award

### **Responding to calls across the state**

Region IV Game Wardens have continued to assist in working on Governor Kemp's Crime Suppression Detail in the metro Atlanta area throughout the year. Region IV Game Wardens assisted in providing security at Stone Mountain during scheduled protest/events. Calls for assistance have come from regions with large lakes near the metro areas. These lakes have seen a surge in water recreational use recently. Region IV Game Wardens have answered the call by volunteering to help give coverage, especially on the major holiday weekends. Region IV Game Wardens responded to Region VI in April when a tornado caused devastation to Bryan County.

### **Community Involvement**

The best asset a Game Warden can have is the trust and support of the community in which they serve. Most of the region Wardens offer multiple Hunter Safety Classes in their counties. Wardens also speak or do presentations with local civic clubs, hunting clubs, schools, local governments, and religious groups on current issues and the duties of a Game Warden.

Cpl. Patrick Gibbs and Cpl. Clint Jarriel have worked with Evans County Wildlife Club over the last few years to hold a Youth Hunting, Calling and Firearms Safety event every spring. Multiple businesses in the surrounding communities donate prizes for the kids attending the event.



Attending local events give Game Wardens the ability to make personal contacts with the county citizens and recruit future wardens. On Saturday April 30, 2022, GWFC Luke Rabun, Cpl. Cameron Dyal, and Sgt. Morty Wood participated in the Day of the Kid community event in Alma.

GW Evan Nobles and Sgt. Clint Martin participated in the Bleckley County Elementary School Career Day. The presentation was given to over 200 students to inform them about what is required to become a Game Warden, the day-to-day job duties and the laws related to hunting, fishing, and boating.



### **Night Hunting**

Poaching deer at night is still a major complaint that citizens of Georgia call into the Ranger Hotline. With cotton, peanuts, soybeans, and corn in a steady rotation in most fields of the region and new clear cuts popping up with tree harvesting, deer have a constant food source near roadways throughout the region. The use of digital night vision scopes creates a challenge in catching the poachers. Also as with many other crimes, a night hunt stop may result in other charges such as possession of drugs, possession of a firearm by a felon, and driving under the influence.

Corporal Mike Wilcox spotted two trucks in a field in Emanuel County at 0100 hours on January 7<sup>th</sup>. The occupants admitted that they were hog hunting. During Cpl. Wilcox's investigation he found six dead deer in the trucks that were still warm and limber. Several weapons and spent shell casings were found in one of the trucks. Search warrants were taken for the night vision and thermal scopes that were found in the trucks. Sgt. McNeely and Cpl. Wilcox were able to tie video from the SD cards to the night the deer were shot. All three suspects were charged and pled guilty to hunting deer at night.



On October 29<sup>th</sup>, GWFC Randell Meeks and GW Jordan Usher were working a night hunting detail near Uvalda. The wardens observed a truck pass by the field using IR light to illuminate the field. Upon stopping the truck, the wardens found one AR platform rifle with a full 30 round and a night vision scope along with a shotgun and one IR flashlight. Charges for hunting from a vehicle, hunting from a public road and hunting deer at night were issued to the driver.

### **Waterfowl**

This year's waterfowl season was unusually busy without having several calls coming into the Hotline about roost shoots and baited duck holes. Several great cases were made by each work section during the season.

Corporal Patrick Gibbs received an in-progress complaint of shooting ducks after hours. Cpl. Gibbs parked 600 yards away and approached on foot utilizing night vision. Cpl. Gibbs located a camouflage moped in the edge of the woods with a warm engine and fresh mud on it. After waiting



for 30 minutes, he encountered one of the hunters walking toward the moped and eventually contacted all 7 hunters. Violations for hunting waterfowl after hours, hunting without a migratory bird license, hunting without a federal duck stamp, and failure to sign federal duck stamp were documented. 18 ducks were confiscated and donated to a local church for a wild game supper.



On December 12, 2021, Game Warden John Kennedy was patrolling Wilcox County on the opening day of the second waterfowl season when he located three duck hunters. GW Kennedy realized that the hunters were over the limit. GW Kennedy checked and found bait at the location. Violations were documented for taking over the daily bag limit, hunting ducks over bait, and multiple license and stamp violations.



### **Patrolling Public Properties**



GW Cameron Dyal and Cpl. Rodney Horne were patrolling the Old Towns Bluff Landing on Bullard Creek WMA and observed 2 subjects sitting in a truck at the landing. When they walked up to the truck, they saw a glass pipe sitting on the center console. A search of the truck revealed 2 bags of meth, 3 glass pipes, a digital scale, and several small clear baggies. The total weight of the meth was just over 27 grams. The subjects were charged with possession of meth, possession, and use of drug related objects, and the WRD lands pass violation.

On 10/23/21, GWFC Luke Rabun was patrolling Flat Tub WMA when he encountered an individual returning to his vehicle from hunting. GWFC Rabun approached the individual and checked the individual's hunting license and equipment. GWFC Rabun observed that the individual's firearm was still loaded and also smelled the odor of burnt marijuana. GWFC Rabun performed a search of the person's vehicle and found a burnt marijuana cigarette as well as muscle relaxers and prescription pills that did not belong to him. The hunter consented to a field sobriety test and was found to be under the influence. The hunter was charged with Hunting under the Influence, and Possession of Marijuana (less than an ounce). The hunter was also issued a warning for Hunting Within 50 Yards of a WMA Road.



### **Assisting other agencies**

Game Wardens also often assist local agencies in searching for lost and missing persons. Game Wardens often use their knowledge of the woods and their ability to use ATV's and vessels as search aids. DNR K-9's are often used to locate weapons and other items that are lost or hidden in the woods.

On Sunday January 9, 2022, GWFC John Kennedy and SGT Morty Wood assisted Tift County Sheriff personnel and Tift County Fire/Recue with locating and recovering a male subject that was missing after he had wrecked his vehicle in a pond several days earlier.

Sgt. Martin's work section trained on using Sonar for searches and the limitations. After sinking a mannequin, the objective was to adjust the Side Scan Sonars on the patrol vessels to get the best image possible. In still water the image was clear enough you could see the rope tied to the mannequin. The results in moving water were totally different. No matter what adjustments were made the mannequin could not be seen.



## Investigations

Many of the tips that come in often need to be investigated through nontraditional means. The investigative unit assist the field staff in obtaining and deciphering mobile data and imbedded picture information. The following cases are great examples.

If you have questions about this tool, please see the FAQ

### Basic Image Information

Target file: IMG\_1139.JPG

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Camera:         | Apple (iPhone SE (2nd generation))   |
| Lens:           | iPhone SE (2nd generation) back camera 3.99mm f1.8<br>Shot at 4 mm   |
| Exposure:       | Auto exposure, Program AE, 1/4 sec, F1.8, ISO 500  |
| Flash:          | Auto, Fired  |
| Date:           | October 17, 2021 12:45:11AM (timezone not specified)<br>(1 day, 8 hours, 5 minutes, 18 seconds ago, assuming image timezone of 5 hours behind GMT)   |
| Location:       | Latitude-longitude: [REDACTED] North, [REDACTED] West<br><br>Map via embedded coordinates at: Google, Yahoo, Bing (also see the Google Maps pane below)  |
| Altitude:       | 34 meters (113 feet)<br>Camera Pointing: North-northeast<br>Timestamp given is roughly 3 hours behind GMT  |
| File:           | 3.024 x 4.032 JPEG (12.2 megapixels)<br>4,948,216 bytes (4.7 megabytes)  |
| Color Encoding: | <b>WARNING:</b> Embedded color profile: "unrecognized embedded color profile 'display P3'"<br>Some popular web browsers ignore embedded color profiles, warning users of those browsers use the wrong colors for this image.<br>Images for the web are most widely viewable when in the sRGB color space and with an embedded color profile. See my Introduction to Digital-Image Color Spaces for more information. |

© P. H. Main: JPEG image displayed here at 15% width (1/6)



Click image to isolate, click this text to show histogram

In October of 2021 Sgt. Shaymus McNeely was contacted by a complainant in Screven County in reference to the killing of a large deer at night, but game checked it as a legal kill. The complainant additionally provided pictures taken by the suspect. Criminal analyst Ashley Moon analyzed the pictures for time and location data. Using the report provided by criminal analyst Moon, Sgt. McNeely and GWFC Jack Thain interviewed the suspect who confessed to shooting the deer at night and falsely game checking the kill. The suspect was charged with hunting deer at night and later pled guilty.

On November 16<sup>th</sup>, GWFC Rabun received a complaint that an individual shot an 8-point buck from his vehicle on Old Axson Rd. in Coffee County. GWFC Rabun found that the suspect turned a buck into a nearby processor that morning but tagged the buck in another county after the 24-hour deadline. GWFC Rabun interviewed the suspect and was informed that the deer was killed with a firearm on a hunting club in Atkinson County. GWFC Rabun found that the suspect was a convicted felon and confiscated the buck as well as the firearm that was used to kill the deer. After performing a search warrant on the suspect's cell phone, and obtaining location data, it was found that the suspect did not spend time at the hunting club in Atkinson County on the day that the deer was killed. The location data showed the suspect in the area of Old Axson Rd, during the time the complainant said he shot the deer from the Rd. GWFC Rabun, Cpl. Williams, and a member of the investigative unit interviewed the suspect again and gained a confession that the deer was shot from a vehicle on Old Axson Rd. GWFC Rabun obtained arrest warrants for Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon, Hunting Big Game From a Public Road, Hunting From a Vehicle, and Reporting and Recording Procedures for Game Animals and Birds.





## Region V- Albany



*L to R: Scott Carroll, Eric White, Steve Robinson, Dean Gibson, Ryan Buice, Alex Chambers, Seth May, Blake Chafin, Jim Atchley, Greg Wade, Drew Beverly, Steve Thomas, Taylor Beamon, Rick Sellars, KP Boatright, Al Greer, Logan South, Thomas Sibley, Tony Cox, Quinn Fogle, Drew Weathersby, Jeremy Bolen, Eric Isom and K-9 "BO" (Not Pictured Greg Castelli and Jesse Harrison)*

The Region V Law Enforcement Division is comprised of thirty-one counties in the southwest portion of the state with the headquarters located in Albany. Within the region there are seven large reservoirs, two major rivers, a multitude of smaller streams, eighteen wildlife management areas, two Public Fishing Areas, nine State Parks, Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, and Ft. Benning Military Base.



*L to R: Captain Rick Sellars, AOC Taylor Beamon, Sgt. Quinn Fogle*

Currently, the region has twenty-six POST certified Game Wardens, with twenty-four assigned field duties, and Captain Rick Sellars and Sergeant Quinn Fogle assigned administrative responsibilities. The region currently has one non-sworn administrative staff member, Taylor Beamon the Administrative Assistant III. Ms. Beamon was hired to fill the vacancy left by Cindy Hynote's retirement in August of 2021.



**The Region's 31 counties are divided into 5 work units:**

**Lake Blackshear Work Section**



*L to R: Alex Chambers, Blake Chafin, Sgt. Al Greer, and Cpl. Logan South (not pictured Cpl. Jesse Harrison)*

Sergeant Al Greer's work section encompasses 6 counties in the northeastern part of Region 5. These counties are Dooly, Crisp, Macon, Sumter, Schley, and Lee. The section is responsible for the Flint River from the north Macon County line to the south Lee County line and includes Lake Blackshear. Within the 6 counties, the work section is responsible for law enforcement on Flint River WMA, Montezuma Bluffs WMA, Cordele Fish Hatchery, and Georgia Veterans State Park.

This year several changes occurred in Sgt. Greer's section. Corporal Clint Martin was promoted to Sergeant and transferred to Region 4. Game Warden First Class Logan South was promoted to Corporal within the work section and is assigned to Lee County. Game Warden Blake Chafin was promoted to Game Warden First Class within the section and is assigned to Macon County. Game Warden Cadet Alex Chambers became a new member of the section in January of this year. Game Warden Alex Chambers graduated the Game Warden Academy in June of this year and is currently assigned to Sumter County. Corporal Jesse Harrison is assigned to Crisp County.

The make-up of the section has both rural and urban aspects contained within it. With the population intertwined with rural farmland and large timber tracts, the work section spent over 500 hours working citizen complaints this year. The section issued 411 total citations and warnings enforcing the laws, while protecting the citizens and wildlife of this state. The section worked one boating incident and one drowning that occurred on Lake Blackshear. While enforcing the boating safety laws on the Flint River and Lake Blackshear, the section arrested 9 people for boating under the influence. During hunting season, the section charged four subjects for hunting deer at night, and one person for hunting under the influence. The section apprehended two subjects for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon during hunting season.

## Lake Seminole Work Section

Sgt Cox's Work Section includes Decatur, Seminole, Baker, Grady, Early, and Miller County. Game Wardens in this work unit patrol Lake Seminole, Flint River, Chattahoochee River, Ochlocknee River, Spring Creek and Tired Creek Reservoir. The work section consists of Sgt. Tony Cox, Cpl. Steve Thomas, Cpl. Thomas Sibley, GW KP Boatright and GW Seth May.



L to R: Cpl. Steve Thomas, Cpl. Thomas Sibley, Sgt. Tony Cox, Seth May, and KP Boatright

This year, Game Wardens made 13 BUI arrest along with 3 counts of child endangerment. They also investigated one boating incident, two drownings and one hunting incident. Game Wardens recorded a total of 391 violator contacts. Out of those contacts, two individuals were charged for Hunting Alligator Out of Season, five individuals were charged with Hunting Deer at Night, Hunting Big Game from a Public Road and Hunting from a Motor Vehicle. There was also one individual charged for Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon. A total of 45 individuals were charged with Hunting Over Bait, and 34 of those individuals were hunting waterfowl. Due to his hard work and dedication, GW KP Boatright received the Torch Award for the State. GW Boatright and Sgt. Cox received the Governor's Public Safety Award from Governor Kemp for a water rescue on Lake Seminole.



## Albany Work Section

The Albany work section is comprised of Dougherty, Worth, Mitchell, Colquitt, Brooks, and Thomas Counties, encompassing approximately 3,000 square miles. The major waterways within these counties are Lake Worth, Kinchafoonee Creek, Muckalee Creek, Ochlocknee River, Flint



*L to R: Drew Beverly, Sgt. Greg Wade, and Cpl. Eric White*

River, and Little River. This work section holds 4 Wildlife Management Areas (Chickasawhatchee, Albany Nursery, Doerun Pitcher Plant Bog, River Creek) and 1 State Park (Reed Bingham). This section is currently patrolled by three Game Wardens: Sgt. Greg Wade (K9 Cuff), Cpl. Eric White, and Game Warden Drew Beverly. Cpl. David Jones is currently detached to the Investigative Unit.

Throughout the year, Game Wardens in the Albany section issued 610 citations and warnings. Some violations of note were boating/hunting under the influence (3), hunting deer at night (2), and hunting/ fishing without permission (31). Wardens responded to and investigated 1 boating incident and no hunting incidents were reported.

Sgt. Wade assisted with multiple K-9 requests from local and state agencies for various crimes. He assisted with the departmental hiring process for evaluating prospective candidates for employment, attended High Risk Man Tracking, SSGT refresher course, Natural Resource Conservation Workshop DNR Liaison, and was certified as a taser instructor. Sgt. Wade continues to instruct employees as a use of force/de-escalation and defensive tactics. He, along with K-9 Cuff, also serve on the Special Operations Group (S.O.G.).

Cpl. White serves on the Sonar Team and has attended its annual week-long training at Laura Walker State Park in Waycross, Ga. Cpl. White has also attended NASBLA's level-2 boating incident reconstruction training at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth, Ga. He also was tasked as the sections Field Training Officer, training new Cadets once they graduate the Game Warden Academy. Cpl. White is also continuing his education by attending the PMP program at the Command College of Columbus State University. Cpl. White also assisted local Colquitt County emergency services with response to a tornado which had damaged an area he was patrolling.

GWFC Drew Beverly has attended multiple P.O.S.T. trainings including Crisis Intervention Training (C.I.T.), Field Training Officer (F.T.O.) certification, and advance report writing. Warden Beverly was instrumental in patrolling our area WMAs, which he proved crucial in capturing a subject who had stolen a back-pack blower from a River Creek WMA shop.



## Columbus Work Section



*L to R: Cpl. Dean Gibson, Sgt. Jeremy Bolen, Ryan Buice, and Cpl. Eric Isom  
(Not pictured Greg Castelli)*

Sergeant Bolen's section consists of Harris, Muscogee, Talbot, Taylor, Chattahoochee, and Marion Counties. The Game Wardens in this work unit patrol Lake Harding, Lake Oliver, Goat Rock, along with several miles of the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers. Several state-owned properties are also located within the work section including 7 Wildlife Management Areas, 1 Public Fishing Area, and 2 State Parks. Game Wardens assigned to this work unit are Cpl. Eric Isom, Cpl. Dean Gibson, Game Warden Greg Castelli, and Game Warden Ryan Buice.

In January of 2022, Game Warden Dean Gibson located a baited duck shoot while on patrol in Talbot County. Two hunters were charged with hunting ducks over bait after GW Gibson located corn in the water. The hunters killed nine wood ducks between the two of them and one of the hunters was using lead shot. The ducks were confiscated as evidence and donated to a local food shelter.

In February of 2022, Cpl. Eric Isom was recognized as the Officer of the Year for the Albany Exchange Club and Officer of the Year for the Rotary Club of Moultrie.

In May of 2022, Cpl. Eric Isom, Game Warden Ryan Buice, and Game Warden Greg Castelli attended the Safe Kids of Columbus PFD event. Academy Sports and Outdoors donated 500 lifejackets to Safe Kids Columbus, an organization dedicated to keeping children safe on local Lakes and Rivers. Safe Kids works hand in hand with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Columbus Police Department, Muscogee County Sheriff's Office, and Columbus Fire & EMS to ensure safety on the water in the Columbus area.

Cpl. Dean Gibson received the Region 5 NWTF Officer of the Year Award, as well as the Region 5 Game Warden of the Year Award. Cpl. Eric Isom received the Officer of the Year Award for the Albany Exchange Club and Rotary Club of Moultrie. Game Warden Greg Castelli received the Region 5 Boating Safety Officer of the Year Award. Game Warden Ryan Buice received the Region 5 Hunter Education Instructor of the Year Award.

Work section Game Wardens responded to a total of 4 drownings, made 44 hunting over bait cases, and arrested 33 operators for boating under the influence.

## Lake Walter F. George Work Section

This work section covers the rural area along the western border of Region V, including Stewart, Randolph, Terrell, Webster, Quitman, Calhoun and Clay Counties. Outdoor recreation, timber production and farming are the primary land uses in this portion of the region.



*L to R: Cpl. Steve Robinson, Sgt. Jim Atchley, Cpl. Scott Carroll, Drew Weathersby*

Only four game wardens have the pleasure of patrolling the seven counties along the Georgia/Alabama border. Within this work section, game wardens patrol over 30,800 acres of state WMA lands on 4 WMA's, 700 acres of the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge (Bradley Unit), 3 state parks and the 46,000-acre Lake Walter F. George.

The officers patrolling this area include Sergeant Jim Atchley, Corporal Scott Carroll, Corporal Steve Robinson, and Game Warden Drew Weathersby. This year has seen a change with Thomas Sibley promoting to Corporal and transferring from Calhoun Co. to Baker County under Sergeant Tony Cox. Game Warden Drew Weathersby is a new addition to the work section and is assigned to Randolph Co., Corporal Steve Robinson is assigned to Stewart Co. and Corporal Scott Carroll is assigned to Terrell Co. Game Warden Drew Weathersby graduated from the Game Warden Academy in June and has hit the ground running. In his short tenure and while completing his field training, GW Weathersby has already been involved arrests for BUI and BUI Child endangerment. He is blending well with the work section and is already very knowledgeable with the work section area.



## Region VI- Brunswick

Region VI is comprised of 19 counties divided into 5 work sections. Each section stays very busy from working hunting and fishing to the Commercial Fishing industry. Below is a small portion of the good work Region VI Game Warden's do.

### Berrien, Cook, Echols, Lanier, and Lowndes Work Section

Sgt. Jon Penuel

Sgt. Patrick Dupree was selected as Supervisor of the Year and retired on June 1, 2022.



On opening weekend of turkey season, Game Warden Aaron Powell received a complaint of hunting without permission in Berrien County. Game Warden Powell and Sgt. Jon Penuel responded to the area to investigate. While on scene, the complainant advised them that while driving down the county dirt road, when he came through a curve, he saw a pickup truck stopped in the road a short distance in front of him. He then observed a male subject in camouflage jump the ditch and run to the back of the truck and throw what appeared to be a large turkey in the back of the truck and then the truck sped away. During their investigation, the Game Wardens found

turkey feathers, footprints, blood, a shotshell wad and a spent 12-gauge shotshell at the scene. With this information in hand, the Game Wardens went to the residence where the vehicle was registered. After interviewing the subjects at the home, they confessed to riding around the area and when they saw the turkey in the field, the passenger got out of the truck and slipped through the tall brush to sneak up on the turkey and kill him. Both subjects were charged with Hunting without Permission and Hunting Big Game from a Public Road. The turkey was seized as evidence and the meat was donated to a local family in need.



During deer season, Corporal Daniel North received a complaint of hunting from the road in Echols County. Corporal North responded to the area and spoke with a homeowner that heard the shots and saw a vehicle near his house when the incident took place. The homeowner also provided Corporal North with video surveillance footage from his home security system that captured the entire incident. The video showed a pickup truck stop in front of the home, a gunshot can then be heard coming from the vehicle and the driver and passenger then exit the vehicle and drag a deer back to the vehicle and load it into the truck and leave. Corporal North recognized the vehicle, which belonged to a local member of a dog deer hunting club. Corporal North located the vehicle and both occupants and each were charged with Hunting from a Vehicle and Hunting Big Game from a Public Road.



## Atkinson/Clinch/Ware/Charlton Work Section

Sgt. Jason Shipes

Our work section welcomed Game Warden Erin McClellan to the section. She successfully graduated from the 36<sup>th</sup> Game Warden Academy and is assigned to Stephen C. Foster/Charlton County.



On the morning of November 25<sup>th</sup>, GWFC Joseph Cowart located five subjects hunting ducks in Atkinson County. GWFC Cowart suspected that the area may have been baited, with the assistance of Corporal Sam Williams, officers confirmed that corn was placed in the creek. As a result, five subjects were charged with hunting over bait.

On September 4<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Mark Pool and Corporal Sam Williams were patrolling for dove hunting activity in Atkinson County when they located several vehicles parked near a locked gate. Game Wardens encountered a group of dove hunters in the middle of a cow pasture approximately one mile from the parked vehicles. Upon further investigation, officers inspected a recently harrowed strip and found bird seed scattered on top of the ground. Numerous violations for hunting over bait was documented.



Sgt. Jason Shipes, Corporal Mark Pool, Corporal Sam Williams, and GW Joseph Cowart assisted with this year's annual Georgia Sheriffs Boys Ranch deer hunt. This event is sponsored by Superior Pine located in Fargo, Ga. In attendance were Clinch County Sheriff Stephen Tinsley, Echols County Sheriff Randy Courson, CEO of Superior Pine LLC. and Georgia State Senator Russ Goodman. For most of the participants, this was their first opportunity to go hunting, much less harvest their first deer.

While checking for fishing activity on the Satilla River in Ware County, Sgt. Jason Shipes located a vehicle parked on the boat ramp. As Sgt. Shipes approached the vehicle, he observed the driver of the vehicle smoking some type of illegal substance. Both subjects were later arrested and charged with possession of methamphetamine.

**Brantley, Long, Pierce, Wayne Work Section****Sgt. Chase Altman**

Sgt. Chase Altman's work section recorded a total of 9 BUI's this past fiscal year. Cpl. John Evans had a total of 6 BUI's, GWFC Judd Sears had 2 BUI's, and Cpl. Bobby White had 1 BUI. This was a combined effort, focusing on concentrated patrols on the Altamaha River during the holidays and busy weekends.

On the night of 11/12/2021, Cpl. John Evans was working a night hunting complaint in Wayne County. A vehicle was seen shining an infrared light out the window as it came towards Cpl. Evans patrol vehicle. Cpl. Evans pulled out in front of the truck and activated his blue lights. The truck tried to swerve around Cpl. Evans, but he was able to block him from doing so. The truck then went in reverse and sped away as Cpl. Evans gave chase. The truck made it to an intersection and went down into the ditch and back out, cutting Cpl. Evans off and went down a dead-end dirt road. Cpl. Evans pursued the truck as it went over the ditch into the woods and then stopped a good distance in the wooded area. Cpl. Evans got out on foot and gave chase but was unable to locate the suspect. Enough evidence was obtained at the scene, along with a rifle that the suspect hid in the woods, for Cpl. Evans to obtain an arrest warrant for the suspect, who also came back to be a convicted felon as well.

During the first two weekends before turkey season came in, Cpl. Bobby White focused on illegal turkey hunters who may be getting started ahead of everyone else. These patrols resulted in back-to-back weekends of catching out of season turkey hunters. A total of 4 hunters were charged with hunting turkeys out of season. In all, Cpl. White made 17 turkey contacts, which included hunting over bait and hunting on a closed WMA.

On December 11<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Chase Altman and GWFC Judd Sears assisted the Brantley County Sheriff's office with their annual "Shop with a Cop" event. Sgt. Altman and GWFC Sears both escorted and assisted with 3 kids each, riding them in the patrol vehicles and helping them pick out presents from Walmart.

**Bryan, Chatham, Liberty Work Section****Sgt. Cindy Miller**

While on a Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) patrol, on October 23, 2022, Game Wardens Tim Morris, Cindy Miller, and Barry Britt boarded a fishing vessel in Federal Waters. The captain of the vessel was in possession of an undersized Cobia and 4 illegal Red Snapper. Federal Waters were not open for Red Snapper. A federal case packet was completed and turned over to NOAA National Marine Fisheries.

In February 2022 Game Warden Tim Morris was promoted to Corporal in the Chatham, Bryan, Liberty Counties work section.

During the early morning hours of May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Cpl. Barry Britt, and Sgt. Cindy Miller along with Chatham County Marine Patrol Sgt. Danny Walker responded to a fatality boating incident on the Wilmington River in Savannah, GA. At approximately 3:30 am, a 28' center console vessel struck an unlit red marker in the Intercoastal Waterway on the Wilmington River. One adult male occupant suffered a severe head injury during the collision with the marker and died from his injuries.

On 5/28/2022 (the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend) Sergeant Cindy Miller, Corporal Tim Morris, Game Warden Douglas Chambers, and Game Warden Quintin Reed responded to a fatality boat collision involving two mid-range vessels which collided in the Wilmington River near Thunderbolt, GA. The boating incident resulted in five deaths (four out of five members of one immediate family), three serious injuries, and the operator of one vessel being arrested for Boating Under the Influence.

Additional Game Wardens from the surrounding counties along with Sonar equipment was brought to the scene to assist with the incident and to locate three victims who were still in the water after having been ejected from their respective vessels because of the boat collision. All three victims were located and recovered from the water the following day. As a result of the DNR Critical Incident Reconstruction Team's investigation, the operator who was arrested for Boating Under the Influence was later indicted by a Grand Jury on ten counts of Homicide by Vessel in the first degree, six counts of serious injury by vessel, Boating Under the Influence less safe, and Reckless Operation of a vessel.

On June 05, 2022, at approximately 1730 hours a vessel heading south in Turner's creek collided with the pylon under the US 80 bridge. The vessel was a 15 ft Boston Whaler occupied by 1 male and 1 female each 16 years of age. Chatham County Game Wardens Doug Chambers and Corporal Barry Britt were already on the water and responded to the incident. The incident resulted in multiple lacerations and multiple serious injuries. Game Warden Quintin Reed responded to the hospital to check on the status of the teenagers and to collect witness statements, if possible, but was unable to due to the status of the victims.

### **Camden, Glynn, McIntosh Work Section**

### **Sgt. David Brady**

In July of 2021, GW's Zach Griffis, Matt Thompson, and Sgt. David Brady worked a drowning recovery with Glynn County off Frederica River regarding a male subject that had fallen off his sailing vessel, became entangled in the lines of the vessel and was unable to recover himself from the water. A group of boaters spotted the activity and called 911. Once on-scene, GW's secured the vessel, recovered the body and transported the victim to a nearby marina where the body was turned over to the Coroner.



Also in July of 2021, GW Zach Griffis and Sgt. David Brady were conducting a concentrated patrol for inbound offshore vessels in McIntosh County when Griffis and Brady conducted a vessel stop and inspection of a 25-foot recreational fishing vessel. During the vessel check, GW Griffis boarded the vessel and inspected the compartments on the boat while talking to the captain and occupants. The vessel check resulted in the seizure of 10 illegally possessed red snapper (closed season) and 2 undersize black sea bass. The captain and occupants were charged federally for the violations. Later in the month, GW's Zach Griffis, Matt Thompson, and David Brady contacted another vessel with illegally caught red snapper and black sea bass as well.





In September of 2021, Game Warden Errol Hall and Corporal Colte Shaske were working local Wildlife Management Area (WMA) for early season activity. They investigated a case where a man had killed a whitetail deer illegally and contacted the suspect and located the illegally killed deer.

In the fall of 2021, Corporal Colte Shaske and Corporal Jay Bright were working a complaint area and set up surveillance of a tidal creek where individuals had previously set gill nets underneath a bridge to trap fish as the creek rose and fell on the tides. After several hours of surveillance, the suspects were apprehended checking the nets for fish.

In December of 2021, Game Warden Matt Tsiklistas and Corporal Jay Bright were working an area in McIntosh County where a subject was collecting and harvesting oyster culch for commercial gain to sell to landowners for driveways and decorative uses. The suspect had violated the Marshland Protection Act by excavating the marsh for over 25 bags of oyster culch. The case was investigated by LED Game Wardens and Compliance & Enforcement from Coastal Resources Division. The suspect was served a civil notice for violation of marshland protection act.

In January of 2022, GW's Zach Griffis, Matt Tsiklistas and Corporal Jay Bright were working an area in McIntosh County for night deer hunting activity when a vehicle passed by shining a spotlight from the window. GWs initiated a traffic stop and determined the subjects were night deer hunting. Upon further investigation, GW's and the Sheriff's Office found the suspects to be in possession of Fentanyl and several other dangerous drugs. The suspects were charged with hunting deer at night, hunting from motor vehicle, hunting from a public road and Violation of Georgia Controlled Substance Act.



In February of 2022, Corporal Colte Shaske assisted the Camden County Sheriff's Office with a vehicle stop on I-95. During the traffic stop, Corporal Shaske located 13 iguanas that had come from south Florida and were being transported to South Carolina. Corporal Shaske assisted the Sheriff's Office and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with the animal cruelty case and a deeper investigation by USFWS into the suspects and their involvement into other criminal activity.

In March of 2022, GW's Matt Tsiklistas, Lucas Barnard and Sgt. David Brady were patrolling offshore waters when they conducted a vessel check on a 20-foot vessel that was fishing offshore. GW Tsiklistas boarded the vessel and determined that the two men were in possession of 49 undersize black sea bass. The case was turned over to National Marine Fisheries for prosecution by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

## **Investigative Unit**

The Investigative Unit (IU) is comprised of two full-time investigators, two detached investigators and one Intelligence Analyst. The IU is responsible for undercover investigations, administration of the Critical Incident Reconstruction Team (CIRT), the Marine Theft Unit (MTU) as well as investigation assistance to the Special Permit Unit (SPU). The primary function of the Investigative Unit is to provide field Game Wardens with investigative support. The Investigative Unit is able to fulfill this mission with the support of 13 Game Wardens that perform a collateral duty called "Regional Investigator". Regional Investigators assist the IU with overt and covert investigations. The IU also serves the field as a central point of contact for information sharing on a statewide level. In 2021, the Investigative Unit's Criminal Intelligence Analyst completed her Level 2 training which significantly expanded her support capabilities. Over the past 2 years all investigators and Analyst have completed the ZetX 40 Hour Advanced Cellular Investigations and Geo-fence Training. This technology is requested and used daily not only by Georgia Game Wardens but also by state prosecutors, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and countless police and sheriff's departments. Through this assistance, the Investigative Unit and the Department has strengthened working relationships with other law enforcement agencies throughout the state - benefiting Georgia law enforcement and more importantly, the citizens we serve.

### **Undercover Investigations**

The Investigative Unit is responsible for undercover investigations which are used when traditional enforcement methods would be problematic or unsuccessful. The Regional Investigators are full-time Game Wardens who have received training in undercover operations and equipment and are used throughout the state as needed.

Last year, the Investigative Unit conducted and managed 547 investigations and calls for assistance from the field and from other agencies (both in and out-of-state). These investigations were comprised of assistance with search warrants, intelligence gathering, buy/bust and both short and long-term investigations. The focus of many of these investigations included the sale or possession of wildlife and wild animals. These violations are difficult to address without the aid of undercover officers.

### **Critical Incident Reconstruction Team (CIRT)**

Georgia has 13 CIRT investigators assigned throughout the state. CIRT investigates fatality and serious injury boating, hunting and state park incidents. Each investigator receives specialized training on investigating and presenting these cases. Last year, CIRT was activated to investigate 6 boating incidents, 3 hunting incidents and one fatality on a State Park.

### **Marine Theft Unit (MTU)**

The primary function of the MTU is to assist law enforcement officers in the field. The MTU conducts computer database and offline searches, hidden hull identification number location assistance and assists with locating and recovering stolen vessels. The MTU also serves as the point of contact for customers as well as court systems related to the abandoned vessel process. Last year, the MTU received 122 abandoned vessel/stolen boat requests from the public and field. MTU also fielded numerous phone calls related to the abandoned vessel process. This past year, the MTU was inundated with reports of stolen vessels. The unit has worked and accomplished in recovering 9 of these stolen vessels.

## Special Permits Unit

The Georgia DNR Law Enforcement Division, Special Permits Unit issued and maintained 2,701 permits and collected approximately \$70,155.00 in generated fees, for the following:

- Alligator Farm License
- Commercial Fox Hunting Preserve License (Fox Pen)
- Commercial Turtle Farm Permit
- Dog Deer Permit
- Fee Exempt Wild Animal License
- Fee Exempt Wildlife Exhibition License
- Film Production Wildlife Permit
- Import /Exports Permit
- Nuisance Wildlife Control Government Agency Permit
- Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator Permit
- Scientific Collecting Permit
- Wild Animal Regulated Fish License
- Wild Animal License
- Wildlife Exhibition License

## K-9 Unit

The Division continues to use K-9s to enhance patrol efforts by Game Wardens and to provide assistance to other agencies for man tracking and article searches. The dogs and their handlers are certified in Man-tracking, Apprehension, Article Recovery and Wildlife Detection, and the Unit played a part in numerous cases during the year, including assisting the GBI in 15 death investigations. The complete unit participated in 96 hours of in-service training. One notable case occurred in November of 2021 when Sgt. Greg Wade received a complaint about a large buck being illegally taken by a subject in Brooks County. He went to the area where the subject had supposedly shot the deer, deployed K-9 Cuff, and gave the command to search the area for wildlife. Cuff quickly located a small pool of blood 90 yards off the roadway. After taking



*Sgt. Wade and K-9 Cuff with the illegally taken deer.*

samples of the blood, Sgt. Wade located the deer at a local taxidermist and seized it. He sent samples of the hide and the blood to Florida FWC's lab for DNA analysis. The lab confirmed that the samples were a match. After warrants were secured, on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the subject was arrested and charged for hunting without a license, hunting without big game license, hunting from a public road, hunting from a motor vehicle, hunting without permission, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.



*Cpl. Keith Page and K-9 Rio locate a subject hunting on a closed WMA.*

### FY2022 K-9/Handler Teams

**Sgt. Brooks Varnell and K-9 Taz**

**Cpl. Tim Hutto and K-9 Titan**

**Cpl. Eric Isom and K-9 Bo**

**Sgt. Greg Wade and K-9 Cuff**

**Cpl. Keith Page and K-9 Rio**

**GWFC Jack Thain and K-9 Case**

**GW Jared Wood and K-9 Judge**



## Training Unit

### 36<sup>th</sup> Game Warden Academy

The 36<sup>th</sup> Game Warden Academy began on January 9<sup>th</sup> at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. During the 23-week academy, the cadets completed their Basic Peace Officer Certification as well as the Game Warden Academy. 18 cadets began the training with 1 deciding to voluntarily withdraw during week 7 of the academy. The remaining 17 cadets graduated on June 17<sup>th</sup> and are currently out on Field Training in their Regions of assignment.



### In-Service Training

In the fall of 2021, the Division conducted fall firearms in-service training here at GPSTC. The training consisted of Deadly Force and De-Escalation Training, Simulator Training, and weapons training to include the G-45 9mm pistol and 870 duty shotgun. Spring firearms re-qualifications were also held at the training center for the state during March and April. The department was able to add enough Taser X2's to its inventory that allowed for the certification and equipping of all field level Game Wardens from the rank of field sergeant and below. Currently, the Division has 175 Taser X2's assigned in the field. Taser certification is now part of the academy curriculum and cadets are exposed and certified during the week of defensive tactics.

Additional in-service training conducted throughout the year was the Governor's Initiative Community Oriented Policing training. This year's training topic was Mental and Emotional Wellness. Other annual in-service training included statewide NASBLA Seated Battery and Standardized Field Sobriety refresher, Taser re-certification, and a legislative update.

The Division will be completing our annual fall firearms in-service during the months of September, October, November, and December at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. There two full days of training will include the Use of Force Lab, the Use of Force and De-escalation training programs, and rifle training.

During this past year, the DNR Law Enforcement Division Recruitment Team was formed to assist the department with recruiting more qualified applicants. The team is made up of 9 Game Wardens from across the state that will help identify and develop new recruiting strategies. Since the current hiring process is lengthy, a recruitment team member will be assigned to the applicant for the duration of the process to answer questions and be a point of contact.

### **37<sup>th</sup> Game Warden Academy**

The hiring process for the 37<sup>th</sup> Game Warden Academy is nearing the finish line. The applicants have met the departments hiring standards and are now awaiting P.O.S.T. to approve their applications. If all goes as planned, the department will have 22 cadets starting the Basic Mandate Academy on September 26<sup>th</sup> here at GPSTC with a graduation date of December 16<sup>th</sup>. The cadets will then begin the Game Warden Academy on January 8, 2023, and graduate on April 21, 2023.

### **SOG Team**

In May 2022, the LED Special Operations Group (SOG) received gas mask training at the GPSTC. Eighteen SOG team members were issued new Avon PC50 riot gas masks and trained on proper gas mask techniques. The training covered donning, clearing, and doffing procedures as well as CS gas exposure. The SOG is the first division asset that is deployed on any civil disturbance response.



### **Training Academy Staff**



*L-R: Captain Mitch Oliver, Debra Hollar, Joe Talaber*

## Aviation Unit

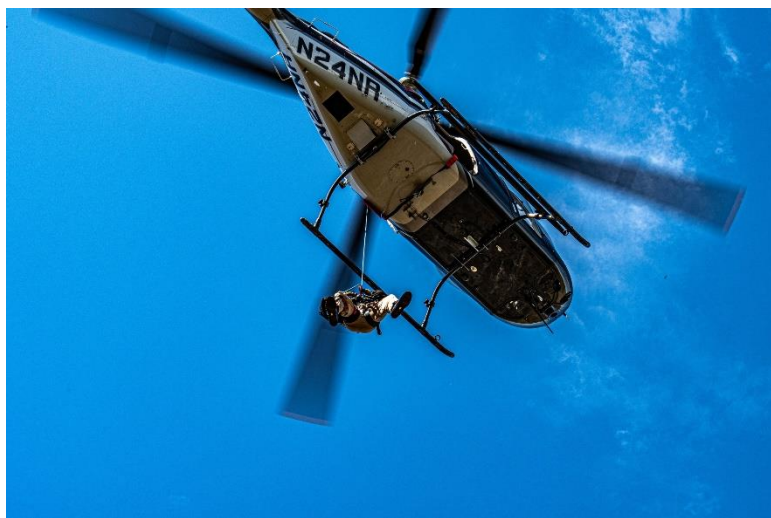
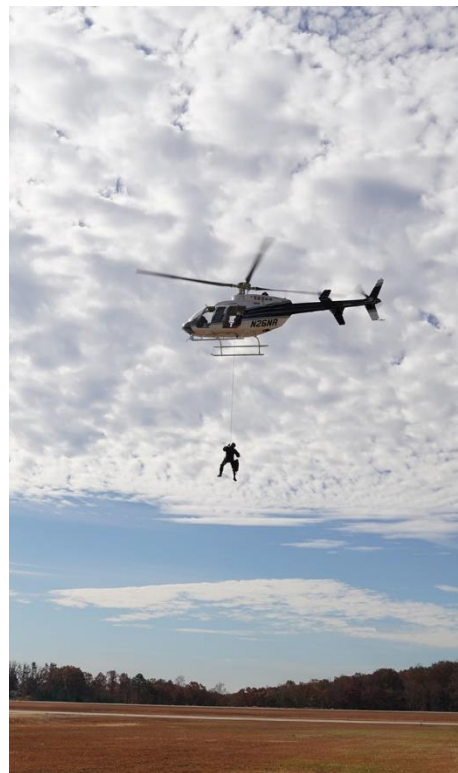
The LED Aviation Support Unit supports all DNR Divisions and other state agencies utilizing three Bell 407GX/GXi helicopters. This past year, the Aviation Unit flew 500 hours in support of the Division's Game Wardens as they conducted their core mission of protecting the states waterways and woodland areas. This consisted of flying support throughout the hunting season from early fall through early spring.

Game Wardens were flown on county surveys looking for baited food plots, duck ponds and illegal shrimping along the Georgia coast. Flight support was also provided for Operation Dry Water, night deer poaching/spotlighting patrols, and searches for missing persons and drowning victims across the state.

The Wildlife Resource Division (WRD) was provided aviation support during surveys of Bald Eagles, Kestrel, Sandhill Cranes, Red Knots, and waterfowl. Capt. Jaye Bridwell flew these same flights along the Georgia coast in addition to surveys for sea turtles, dolphins, and the tagging of manatee. Night missions for illegal shrimping activity were also conducted along the coastline.

In addition to the WRD surveys, Lt. Jamie Allen flew multiple missions assisting the Game Management Section and the Wildlife Conservation Section with prescribed burns on the State WMA's during the late winter months of January through March 2022.

Additionally, the Aviation Unit was actively involved with responding to multiple disaster areas as a result of tornados and inclement weather which caused widespread damage across the state.



Economic development flights continued in several areas throughout the state in support of the Governor's Office and the Georgia Department of Economic Development. The Aviation Unit also assisted other State and Federal law enforcement agencies utilizing the three Bell 407 Helicopters in support of various missions throughout the state.



## Honor Guard

**Honor Guard Commander** – Capt. Derek Dillard

**LED HQ** – Maj. Bob Holley

**Region 1** - Cpl. Russell Epps, Cpl. Brock Hoyt, Cpl. Philip Stout, GWFC Stetson Stevens

**Region 2** – Sgt. Brooks Varnell, Sgt. Cody Jones, Cpl. Dan Schay, GWFC Jeffery Turner

**Region 3** – Sgt. Travis Sweat, Cpl. Ben Payne, GWFC Lamar Burns, GWFC Westin Rabon

**Region 4** – GWFC Jordan Usher, GWFC Luke Rabun

**Region 5** – Sgt. Jeremy Bolen, Cpl. Scott Carroll, Cpl. Dean Gibson, GWFC K.P. Boatright

**Region 6** – Sgt. Chase Altman, Sgt. David Brady, Cpl. Tim Morris, Cpl. Daniel North, GWFC Zac Griffis



### Honor Guard Details

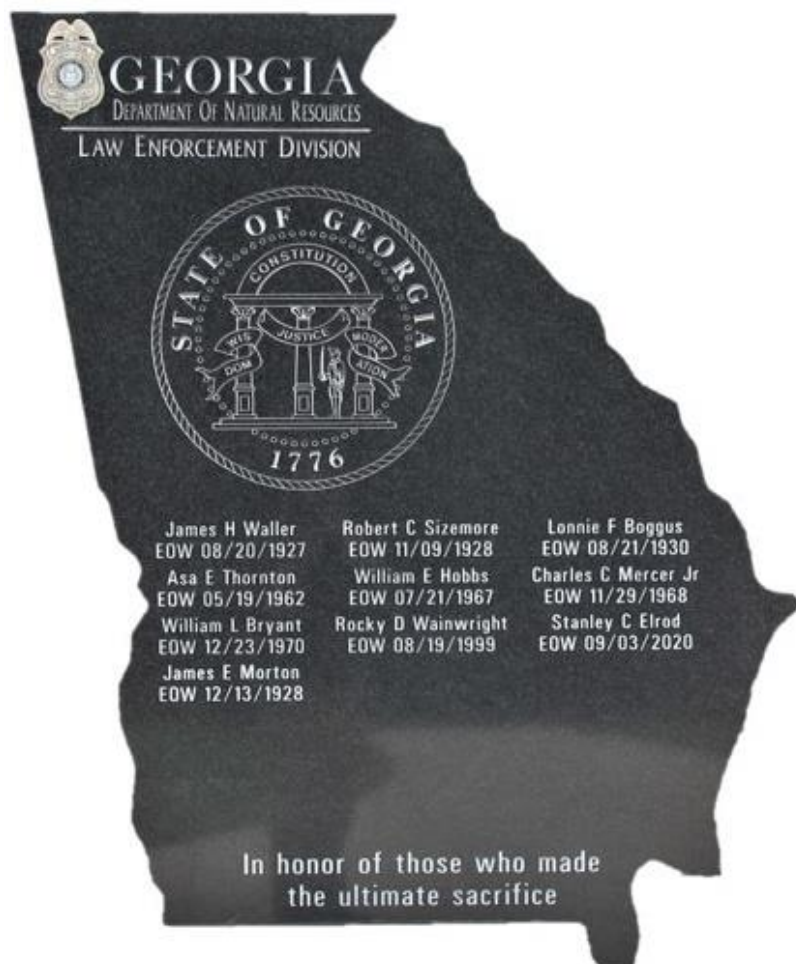
- July 27, 2021 – Funeral detail for Wildlife Tech. 3 Ken Martin in Waycross, Georgia. Maj. Bob Holley, Sgt. David Brady and Cpl. Dan Schay participated in the detail and presented the State flag to his family.
- August 21, 2021 – Presentation of Colors for the DNR LED Awards Banquet at Indian Springs State Park. Sgt. Brooks Varnell, Sgt. Travis Sweat, Cpl. Scott Carroll and Cpl. Ben Payne participated in the ceremony.
- September 22, 2021 – Funeral detail for retired Game Warden Corporal Charles Sims in Greensboro, Georgia. Sgt. Travis Sweat, Cpl. Ben Payne and Cpl. Dan Schay participated in the detail and presented the flag to his family.
- December 2, 2021 – Presentation of Colors for the DNR LED and US Army PAY's Ceremony at DNR LED Headquarters in Social Circle. Cpl. Ben Payne and Cpl. Dan Schay participated in the ceremony along with two members of the US Army.
- June 14-15, 2022 – Conducted annual honor guard training for all new and current members who remain on the honor guard at the GPSTC in Forsyth, Georgia.
- June 16, 2022 – Funeral visitation detail for retired Sergeant Gerald Kersey in Jackson, Georgia. GWFC Westin Rabon participated in the detail.
- June 17, 2022 – Funeral detail for retired Sergeant Gerald Kersey in Jackson, Georgia. GWFC Lamar Burns, GWFC Stetson Stevens and GWFC Westin Rabon participated in the detail and presented his family the flag.
- June 17, 2022 – Presentation of Colors for the DNR LED Game Warden Academy Graduation Ceremony at the GPSTC in Forsyth, Georgia. Sgt. Jeremy Bolen, Sgt. Travis Sweat, Sgt. David Brady, Sgt. Cody Jones, Cpl. Dan Schay and Cpl. Scott Carroll participated in the ceremony.



## Chaplains

The 14 members of the DNR Law Enforcement Division Chaplain Corps currently serve four of the state's seven Regions.

The DNR Chaplains are non-sworn volunteers who support the mission of DNR in providing a source of strength to sworn and non-sworn members of the Agency, their families, and the community. The program supports employees in the handling of crisis situations, comforts victims and their families when incidents occur, and provides counseling and other ministerial functions that may be needed.



## DNR Chaplains

### Region I

Rev. Brandon Brooks  
Rev. Danny Cochran  
Rev. Tac Coley  
Dr. Rudy Ross

### Region II

Rev. Michael Burgamy

### Region III

Dr. Marc Crandlemire  
Rev. John Haney  
Dr. Rick Lanford  
Rev. Joel Vinson, Sr.

### Region IV

Rev. Chip Strickland  
Rev. Stacy Phillips

### Region V

Rev. Daryl Brown

### Region VI

Rev. Charles Houston, Jr.  
Rev. Gregory Loskoski

## Promotions:

GW 2 Lucas Barnard  
 GW 2 Errol Hall  
 GW 2 Adam Kimbrough  
 GW 2 Connor Moon  
 GW 2 Skyler Redmond  
 GW 2 Matthew Thompson  
 GW 2 Jordan Usher  
 GWFC 1 Drew Beverly  
 GWFC 1 Austin Biggers  
 GWFC 1 Saxon Campbell  
 GWFC 1 Greg Castelli  
 GWFC 1 Blake Chafin  
 GWFC 1 Andrew Crider  
 GWFC 1 Kyle Faulknor  
 GWFC 1 Erin McDade  
 GWFC 1 Savannah Miller  
 GWFC 1 Evan Nobles  
 GWFC 1 Aaron Powell  
 GWFC 1 Luke Rabun  
 GWFC 1 Quintin Reed  
 GWFC 1 Stetson Stevens  
 GWFC 1 Levi Thompson  
 GWFC 1 Jason Warren  
 GWFC 1 Jared Wood  
 GWFC 2 Mark Moyer  
 GWFC 2 Jason Harrison  
 GWFC 2 Tim Morris  
 GWFC 2 Doug Chambers  
 GWFC 2 Judd Sears  
 GWFC 2 Randell Meeks  
 GWFC 2 Lamar Burns  
 Cpl. Roger McConkey  
 Cpl. Kalem Burns  
 Cpl. Tyler Lewis  
 Cpl. Philip Stout  
 Cpl. Russell Epps  
 Cpl. Robert Stillwell  
 Cpl. Cameron Dyal  
 Cpl. Clint Jarriel  
 Cpl. Thomas Sibley  
 Cpl. Logan South  
 Cpl. Dean Gibson  
 Cpl. Tim Morris  
 Cpl. Jonathan Segars  
 Sgt. Bubba Stanford  
 Sgt. Bart Hendrix  
 Sgt. Casey Jones  
 Sgt. Clint Martin  
 Sgt. Chase Altman  
 Sgt. Keith Waddell  
 Sgt. Byron Young  
 Cpt. James McLaughlin  
 Cpt. Mitch Oliver  
 Major Bob Holley  
 Lt. Col. Mike England

## Retirements:

Cpl. Tony Wynne  
 Cpl. Dan Stiles  
 Sgt. Brian Keener  
 Sgt. Steve Seitz  
 Sgt. Phillip Scott  
 Sgt. Lee Brown  
 Sgt. Patrick Dupree  
 Sgt. Brian Carter  
 Sgt. Brian Hobbins  
 Cpt. Steven Turner  
 Cpt. Mike Burgamy  
 Lt. Col. Johnny Johnson

| Activity Summary       |  | FY2022        |
|------------------------|--|---------------|
| Hunter Ed Hours        |  | 1,293         |
| I&E Hours              |  | 3,476         |
| Boating Safety Hours   |  | 349           |
| <b>Total Programs</b>  |  | <b>5,118</b>  |
| Land & Water SAR Hours |  | 3,410         |
| Hunting Incidents      |  | 30            |
| Boating Incidents      |  | 120           |
| Drownings              |  | 48            |
| BUIs                   |  | 297           |
| Hunting License Checks |  | 26,905        |
| Fishing License Checks |  | 31,689        |
| Total License Checks   |  | 58,594        |
| Boat Checks            |  | 21,142        |
| Boating Contacts       |  | 6,338         |
| Hunting Contacts       |  | 4,681         |
| Fishing Contacts       |  | 3,051         |
| Environmental Contacts |  | 806           |
| <b>Total Contacts</b>  |  | <b>14,876</b> |







# GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION



**JAMES HIRAM WALLER**

**JAMES EDWARD MORTON**

**ASA EDWIN THORNTON**

**CHARLES C. MERCER**

**ROCKY D. WAINWRIGHT**

**ROBERT CLAYTON SIZEMORE**

**LONNIE F. BOGGUS**

**WILLIAM EARL HOBBS**

**WILLIAM LEE BRYANT**

**STANLEY CURTIS ELROD**



IN MEMORY OF THE OFFICERS  
WHO MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE  
PROTECTING THE PEOPLE AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES OF GEORGIA



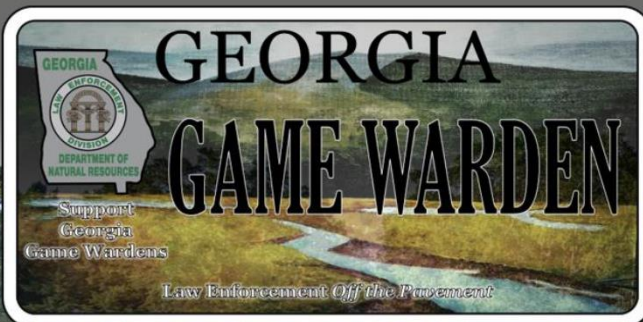


*"Support Georgia Game Wardens  
with the purchase of a specialty  
license plate for your vehicle. I did."*

Michael Waddell  
Bone Collector  
The Outdoor Channel



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