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Central Georgia Game Warden Wins Top Georgia DNR Boating Award

SOCIAL CIRCLE, GA – In early 2024, Game Warden Ben Hawkins, who is assigned to Laurens County in central Georgia, announced at a work section meeting that his goal for the year was to be more vigilant in the enforcement of boating laws, in order to make the waterways safer for boaters. He acknowledged the specific challenges of becoming efficient at detecting and deterring impaired boat operators and was eager to make a difference in his community. True to his word, Hawkins had a phenomenal year of boating enforcement, especially considering his area of assignment has no major lakes or coastal waters to draw large boating crowds. As a result, just 14 months later, he has been named Georgia DNR Law Enforcement's 2024 Boating Safety Game Warden of the Year.



Game Warden Ben Hawkins

“Even though Ben has been a game warden for just two years, he has already shown a selfless attitude and a true desire to serve the public,” said DNR Law Enforcement Director Colonel Mike England. “I am very proud of Game Warden Hawkins and his commitment to boating safety on the state’s waterways.”

Primarily working on the Oconee and Altamaha rivers, and three lakes on Public Fishing Areas in his seven-county work section, Hawkins logged 181 hours to boating safety enforcement, utilizing both water patrols and land patrols. There were 13 BUIs made in the 27-county Metter region in 2024, and Hawkins was either the arresting officer or assisted with 12 of them. Additionally, he solicited the help of game wardens in his work section and two other work sections to conduct multiple details targeting boating violations, specifically impaired operators. He also arrested seven wanted persons while patrolling creeks for fishing and boating activity this year.

Game Warden Hawkins is involved in his community in more ways than just as a law enforcement officer. He spent 38 hours talking to over 770 students at different educational events this past year. Many of these events were at schools where he had the opportunity to educate students on the importance of wearing a life jacket and the dangers associated with boating under the influence.

Hawkins will receive recognition from the Southern States Boating Law Administrators Association this spring and will be a candidate for further honors from that organization. He is also eligible for the Butch Potts “Boating Law Enforcement Officer of the Year” honor from the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators.

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