



GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

NEWS RELEASE

LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Serving Since 1911



Visit us on Facebook, Twitter & YouTube
or at

www.gadnrle.org

Contact:

Mark McKinnon, Public Affairs Officer

Office: (706) 557-3106 Cell: (404) 387-7780

mark.mckinnon@dnr.ga.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 24, 2021

2021 GA DNR Game Warden of the Year and Darnell Award Winners Announced

SOCIAL CIRCLE – On Saturday, August 21st, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division named Game Warden First Class John Rhodes, who is assigned to Hancock County, as the 2021 Game Warden of the Year. Game Warden First Class Tyler Lewis from Cobb County received the James R. Darnell Award as the runner up to Game Warden of the Year.

“These Game Wardens have demonstrated a strong commitment to the Division through his aggressive but fair conservation law enforcement.” said Col. Thomas Barnard, director of the DNR Law Enforcement Division.



Rhodes has proven his commitment to the Division’s mission of Conservation Law Enforcement. Although Rhodes is assigned to Hancock County, he often works boating enforcement on Lake Oconee. He was the recipient of the Region’s 2019 Boating Safety Officer of the Year Award. He was also deployed to Atlanta and Stone Mountain several times to work protests and crime suppression details. This year, Rhodes led the region with 200 violator contacts. He logged 260 hunting license checks, 400 boating safety checks, 523 fishing license checks, and worked 100 complaints. His most notable wildlife case this year involved the taking of a black bear in Hancock County, which has no bear season



Lewis is focused on conservation law enforcement and public service every time he puts on the green and gray. His work section includes Cobb, Bartow, and Cherokee counties and he also answers calls on Allatoona Lake, Red Top Mountain State Park, Pine Log WMA, Allatoona WMA, McGraw Ford WMA, the Chattahoochee River, and the Etowah River. He was the 2020 Torch Award recipient for both Georgia and the Southeast U.S. This year, he checked 330 hunting licenses, 791 fishing licenses, and documented 77 state park patrols and 53 WMA patrols. He also apprehended 17 people for hunting without permission, nabbed a poacher that had alluded game wardens for over a decade, and apprehended two individuals wanted for the murder of a child. On state waterways, he logged 227 hours, resulting in checking 357 checked boats, seven BUIs, and worked six boating incidents.

"These officers have proven themselves as leaders among their peers this past year," said DNR Commissioner Mark Williams. Their hard work every day to enforce the conservation laws of the state and to ensure public safety is a great asset to Georgia citizens and I applaud their contributions."

###

Serving Since 1911