



GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

NEWS RELEASE



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LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Contact:

Mark McKinnon, Public Affairs Officer

Cell: (404) 387-7780

mark.mckinnon@dnr.ga.gov

or at

www.gadnrle.com

FOR IMMEDIATE

RELEASE:

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Boat Operator Indicted in Deadly Wilmington River Crash

SAVANNAH - Earlier today, the Chatham County Grand Jury returned a true bill of indictment against 45-year-old Mark Christopher Stegall of Savannah, charging him with 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 in a boat crash on the Wilmington River on Memorial Day weekend that claimed the lives of five people.

At approximately 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 28th, Georgia game wardens, along with the Chatham County Marine Patrol, Savannah Fire, Chatham Emergency Services, and the U.S. Coast Guard, responded to a boating incident on the Wilmington River near the Oatland Island Wildlife Center docks in Chatham County. According to witnesses, two center console boats carrying a total of nine passengers, six in one vessel and three in the other, were traveling in opposite directions when they collided. Two people were confirmed deceased at the scene and three were missing. The other four passengers suffered various injuries and were transported to Memorial Health Medical Center in Savannah. The three missing victims were located and recovered the next day.

Christopher David Leffler, age 51, Lori Lynn Leffler, age 50, Nathan Leffler, age 17, and Robert Steven Chauncey, age 37, all of Savannah, along with Zachary James Leffler, age 23, of Alpharetta died in the incident.

A joint investigation conducted by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division and the Chatham County District Attorney's Office yielded the charges in today's indictment.

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