

Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report
July 12 – July 18, 2015

This report is a broad sampling of events that have taken place in the past week, but does not include all actions taken by the Law Enforcement Division.



Region I- Calhoun (Northwest)

BARTOW COUNTY

On July 16th, Cpl. Brooks Varnell and RFC Micheal Crawley were on patrol on Pine Log WMA. The officers located two marijuana plants growing in pots near Stamp Creek. The officers contacted the Bartow County Drug Task Force and turned the case over.



Marijuana plants found in Bartow County

CHEROKEE COUNTY

On July 13th at 0400 hours, RFC Zack Hardy and RFC Michael Crawley responded by vessel to Allatoona Lake in the area of Kellogg Creek to assist Cherokee SO, GSP Aviation, and GBI with a missing/kidnapped juvenile. The rangers searched the shoreline in the Kellogg Creek area. The juvenile was safely located just before 0600 hours by Cherokee SO and GSP in another location.

Later that day, RFC Zack Hardy and RFC Michael Crawley assisted Bartow County Sheriff Office with a search for a suspect that shot at a deputy. The deputy was responding to a possible burglary call. When the deputy arrived on scene, the suspect fled on foot and fired two shots at the officer. The suspect ran to the shore of Allatoona Lake near Clark Creek. Bartow County Sheriff Office and Georgia State Patrol searched by land and the DNR rangers searched by vessel. The suspect was not located, however multiple stolen items were located in the wooded area near Allatoona Lake.

HARALSON COUNTY

On July 18th, Cpl. Lee Burns and RFC Daniel Gray conducted a routine patrol on the Tallapoosa River to check for boating and fishing activity. During the patrol Rangers checked 39 individuals and issued one citation for operating vessel w/o PFD's and also issued one citation for possession of marijuana less than one ounce.

FULTON COUNTY

On July 20th, Ranger First Class Daniel Gray and Ranger Mark Puig observed two gentlemen fishing from the shore on the Chattahoochee River. The Rangers made their way to the two and while talking with them discovered they did not possess fishing licenses. They had also caught several bream and two bass about 6 inches long. They received a warning for not having the fishing license and a citation for the undersized bass.

Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)

HART COUNTY

On July 13th, RFC Brandon Pierce received a call from a church member in reference to some trash being dumped on a church property. RFC Pierce investigated the matter and found some information inside the trash. On July 17th, RFC Brandon Pierce and RFC Shane Sartor made contact with the individual and determine that the trash was placed intentionally. RFC Pierce issued a citation for the violation. The violation consisted of unlawful dumping of egregious litter.

On July 15th, Cpl. Craig Fulghum was patrolling Lake Hartwell in the Rock Springs area. Cpl. Fulghum made contact with a boat near Rock Springs boat ramp and noticed alcohol on board the boat. The operator failed field sobriety tests and was arrested. He was transported to the Hart County Detention Center where he then failed an Intox 9000 test. He was charged with boating under the influence.

On July 18th, RFC Brandon Pierce and RFC Shane Sartor patrolled Lake Hartwell for any boating safety/fishing activity. Numerous boats were checked for proper safety equipment, as well as, several fishing licenses were inspected. A total of nine citations and warnings were issued. The violations consisted of failure to obey regulatory marker, operating vessel with improper registration, allowing person to ride bow/gunwale, operating vessel without a throwable device, operating vessel with insufficient PFD, operating vessel without fire extinguisher, operating a PWC during hours of darkness, and operating vessel under the influence. A subject was tested and determined to be boating under the influence. The subject was arrested and transported to the Hart County Jail for booking.

On July 18th, Cpl. Craig Fulghum and Sgt. Stan Elrod patrolled Lake Hartwell for boating safety violations. During their patrols five violations were documented. The violations consisted of allowing underage children to ride in moving vessel without wearing PFD's, insufficient PFD's, and Registration issues. One subject was also arrested for boating under the influence and transported to the Hart County Detention Center where she failed Intox 9000 test. The subject was charged with boating under the influence.

HALL COUNTY

On July 12th, Ranger First Class Mark Stephens and Corporal Jason Roberson were patrolling Hall County in Sunset Cove. Officer Stephens observed a man operating a jet ski without wearing a life jacket. After an investigation the man was arrested for operating a vessel under the influence of alcohol.

On July 18th, Cpl. Jason Roberson worked with Investigator Majors with the Hall County MANS Unit on a high visibility patrol on Lake Lanier. During the patrol, four individuals were arrested for BUI and three for Violation of Georgia Controlled Substance Act.

HABERSHAM COUNTY

On July 15th, RFC Joe Hill was travelling north on Hwy 365 when he observed the passenger of a vehicle throw two pieces of plastic from the passenger side window. RFC Hill made a traffic stop and issued a citation to the passenger for littering.

RABUN COUNTY

On July 12th, Corporal Derek Dillard got a phone call from Tallulah Gorge State Park Manager Danny Tatum about some people in the bottom of the Gorge in a restricted area. Corporal Dillard and Ranger Tatum were able to locate eight people walking up from that particular area of the Gorge floor. Five of the eight people admitted to being in the restricted area which coincided with what Ranger Tatum and Corporal Dillard had observed. The Five subjects were issued citations for being in a restricted area of the Gorge.

On July 17th, RFC Joe Hill patrolled Tallulah Gorge State Park and Tallulah Falls Lake. While on patrol the Ranger observed the driver of a vehicle with an open container of alcohol in the passenger area of the vehicle. RFC Hill determined the man was not under the influence of alcohol, but was in violation of Georgia's open container law. A citation was issued for the violation.

On July 18th, Corporal Derek Dillard and RFC Joe Hill attended the annual Seed Lake Association Meeting and spoke about boating safety to all of the members that were present.

WHITE COUNTY

On July 13th, RFC Anne Britt conducted a boating safety program to the White County Jr. Law Enforcement Academy. She spoke to them about boating safety and also about the career of a Conservation Ranger within the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division.

Region III- Thomson (East Central)

ELBERT COUNTY

On July 18th Corporal Julian Wilkins and Cpl. Mark Patterson patrolled Lake Russell by vessel. During the patrol a number of violations were addressed including operating a vessel without life jackets, insufficient life jackets, allowing a child to ride in a vessel without wearing a life jacket, and several related to other required safety equipment.

LAKE OCONEE

Rangers that worked Lake Oconee were Sgt. Harwell, Cpl. Worth, Cpl. Allen, RFC Boles, Ranger Schay, RFC Tanner, RFC Butler and Ranger Harrison. Violations encountered were Towing skier without an observer, Insufficient PFD's, Failure to obey regulatory markers, Overloaded vessel, Riding the bow of the vessel, operating at night without lights/ improper lights, 100'ft law, allowing an underage child to ride in a moving vessel without a PFD. Cpl. Worth made 1-BUI on a PWC operator. RFC Boles and RFC Butler each had 1- BUI. Rangers patrolled two fireworks show- one at the Ritz and one at Great Waters. Rangers gave glow-sticks to several operators that had lights that did not operate properly or were missing all together.

Cpl. David Allen and Ranger Jason Harrison received a call in reference to a boating incident involving two personal watercrafts on Lake Oconee. The Rangers responded and investigated the incident. The two personal watercrafts were both significantly damaged. A female passenger on one of the personal watercraft had minor injuries on her left leg.

RICHMOND COUNTY

On July 17, 18 and 19, Rangers assisted with the 29th Annual Southern Nationals Drag Boat Races on the Savannah River in Augusta. Top speeds of 267 miles per hour were achieved at the event. Rangers maintained a safety zone along 1 ½ miles of the river. There were not incidents during the event.

BURKE COUNTY

On July 18, Cpl. Adams received a complaint of a four foot alligator in a ladies swimming pool. Cpl. Adams requested assistance from the Game Management section and the alligator was removed.

Region IV- Macon (West Central)

LAKE SINCLAIR

On the afternoon of July 18th, RFC Reese and Cpl. Stanford patrolled Lake Sinclair. Approximately 15 boats were stopped and several citations were issued to include three people skiing after hours.

PUTNAM COUNTY

On the days of July 16th and 17th, RFC Jeremy Reese, Cpl. Lynn Stanford and Sgt. Bo Kelly patrolled several properties by ATV in reference to stolen ATV's. One stolen ATV was located and recovered and other pertinent information was found. The investigation is ongoing.

Region V- Albany (Southwest)

SEMINOLE COUNTY

On July 12th, RFC Tony Cox and Ranger Steve Thomas responded to a boat incident with injuries on Lake Seminole. The incident occurred when a bass boat and a pontoon boat met and collided in a narrow canal near a blind curve. The operator of the bass boat was cited for failure to regulate speed, and the pontoon operator was cited for operating with expired registration.

Region VI- Metter (Southeast)

SCREVEN COUNTY

On July 12th, Corporal Shaymus McNeely, Sergeant Don Dasher, and Ranger Jordan Crawford patrolled the Savannah River out of Poor Robin Landing. Rangers checked several boats and documented violations for operating a vessel with insufficient life jackets and operating a vessel without a throwable device. One suspect was investigated for BUI, and subsequently arrested for operating a vessel under the influence.

On July 13th, Corporal Shaymus McNeely and Sergeant Don Dasher were working fishing activity on Brier Creek. Rangers encountered two groups of fisherman near the Hiltonia Creek Rd. access. While checking the fisherman it was determined that three out of the five did not have fishing license. While documenting the license violations Rangers learned one of the suspects had an active warrant for his arrest out of Burke County. The suspect was arrested and taken to the Screven County Jail.

On July 18th, Corporal Mike Wilcox and Sergeant Don Dasher patrolled the Savannah River in Screven County for boating and fishing violations. Several boats and fishing licenses were checked. Verbal guidance was given for minor violations.

WARE COUNTY

On July 17th, Corporal Jason Shipes and Ranger Judd Sears were checking popular fishing and boating areas along the Satilla River for activity. While checking the Hwy 84 landing Cpl. Shipes and Ranger Sears were able to locate two individuals actively fishing from the shoreline. Upon checking for the required licenses, one of the subjects was found to be fishing without a valid license. The individual was issued a citation for fishing without a license.

On July 18th, Corporal Jason Shipes and Ranger Daniel North were patrolling the area of the Suwannee River Sill inside of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge for boating and fishing activity. Due to low water levels, fishermen were able to walk the banks of the Suwannee River from the Sill and fish from the shoreline. Ranger North noticed one subject walking toward his location carrying fishing equipment as well as a good stringer of chain pickerel. When the individual noticed Ranger North, he stopped and attempted to conceal his catch by hiding it behind a tree before approaching. Upon checking the individual Ranger North learned that the subject was a resident of Florida and failed to purchase a non-resident license. During this time Cpl. Shipes walked further down the bank of the river and encountered two subjects fishing from a vessel. Upon checking for the required safety equipment, Cpl. Shipes found that the operator of the vessel failed to have any life jackets on board. Citations for non-resident fishing without a license and operating a vessel without coast guard approved personal floatation devices were issued.



Chain pickerel or "jack fish" caught by a subject fishing without a license in the Suwannee River

On July 13th, Sergeant Patrick Dupree and Ranger Judd Sears conducted boating safety programs to approximately 100 participants at Laura S. Walker State Park's Camp Reveille. The YMCA's camp participants were instructed on proper life jacket use and the use of a vessel's navigation lights.



Ranger Sears instructing life jacket use at Camp Reveille in Ware County

CLINCH COUNTY

On July 11th, Sergeant Patrick Dupree was speaking with a land manager at Council about illegal road hunting of feral hogs near their hunting property when they heard three gun shots just south of their location. Sgt. Dupree drove to the area along GA94 where the shots came from and observed a pickup truck pulling onto the highway from the road ditch. After stopping the suspicious vehicle, Sgt. Dupree observed a large, freshly-killed hog in the bed of the truck. Ranger Judd Sears was called to the scene and three adult males were charged with hunting without permission, hunting hogs from a vehicle, hunting from a public road, and non-resident hunting hogs without a license. The hog was seized and turned over to the land manager.

LAURENS COUNTY

On July 12th, Corporal Dan Stiles performed a vessel patrol on the Oconee River. Fourteen vessels and six anglers were checked for boating requirements and fishing licenses. One violation was documented for operating a vessel with insufficient personal flotation devices (PFD's) and one violation for operating a vessel with expired registration.

On July 18th, Ranger First Class Allen Mills assisted the Laurens County SO and the Georgia State Patrol (GSP) with a two car accident on Hwy 441 just south of Dublin. One car had slammed into the back of a second car sending the first car off the roadway and tumbling into a row of pine trees. Thankfully, no one was seriously injured in the collision.

On July 18th, Ranger First Class Rodney Horne patrolled Hugh Gillis Public Fishing Area for fishing and boating safety violations. RFC Horne checked 3 persons creel limits and fishing license. Two violations were documented for fishing on a Public Fishing Area without a Wildlife Management Area Stamp.

BEN HILL COUNTY

On July 14th, Corporal Dan Stiles received a call reporting that a subject was on the Ocmulgee River and his vessel had become disabled. Cpl. Stiles responded to the location, launched his vessel, and located the subject. Cpl. Stiles escorted the man back to the boat landing.

WILCOX COUNTY

On July 12th, Corporal John A Stokes patrolled landings for boating safety and fishing violations. Two people were charged at Statham Shoals for fishing without license.

EVANS COUNTY

On July 18th, Ranger First Class Debbie Brannen patrolled the Evans County Public Fishing area. Several licenses were checked resulting in violations for fishing on a PFA without a WMA license and entering a designated fee area without a GORP license were documented.

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY

On July 18th, Sergeant Jon Barnard and Corporal Chase Altman patrolled Bullard Creek WMA and Flat Tub WMA. One ATV was stopped for Illegal Operation of an ATV on a WMA, and one person was found to be in violation for Consumption of an Alcoholic Beverage on a WMA.

TATTNALL COUNTY

July 18th, Ranger First Class Debbie Brannen patrolled Big Hammock WMA. GORP licenses were checked at the firing range with verbal warnings given for entering a designated fee area without a GORP license.

On July 12th, Ranger First Class Clint Jarriel and Corporal Kevin Joyce interviewed a subject who was believed to be involved in some night hunting activity in Tattall County. This was a complaint received anonymously by Ranger First Class Rodney Horn. RFC Clint Jarriel began an investigation into this complaint on July 5, 2015 with help from Corporal Jason Shipes and Sergeant Jon Barnard. After gathering information and interviewing the subject it was evident he was in fact night hunting in the area of Hilton Hall Rd. The subject was charged with hunting deer at night and the antlers from an 8 point buck were confiscated for evidence.



Antlers confiscated in Tattnall County night hunting case

Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)

BRYAN COUNTY

On Sunday July 12, 2015 Corporal Jay Morgan and Ranger First Class Jason Miller was patrolling Morgan's Bridge boat ramp checking for alcohol violations when two subjects was found drinking alcoholic beverages. The two subjects were written citations for having alcohol at the DNR boat ramp.

On Sunday July 12, 2015 Corporal Jay Morgan was at Fort McAllister boat ramp having a boating and safety equipment check when a boat and jet ski docked up at the dock. While completing the boating and safety check Corporal Morgan smelled a strong smell of alcohol on the two subjects. Corporal Morgan called Ranger First Class Jason Miller to assist him with the two subjects. Field sobriety exercise was performed on the two subjects it was determined that both subjects was under the influence of alcohol both subjects was arrested for Boating under the Influence, the two subjects was transported to Bryan County Jail.

On Saturday July 18, 2015 Corporal's Jay Morgan and Bill Bryson, Ranger First Class Jack Thain was on JEA Patrol in St. Catherine's Sound, CAT Reef, Offshore Ossabaw Island checking boats for undersized and over the limit of fish all boats checked was in compliance.