

Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report
March 15 - 21, 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.

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Region I- Calhoun (Northwest)

POLK COUNTY

On March 21st, Sgt. Ricky Dempsey and RFC Daniel Gray conducted a routine patrol on a hunting club. During the patrol the Rangers checked several baited turkey hunting areas. Two individuals were cited for hunting w/o nonresident license, hunting w/o big game license, hunting turkey over bait and using unlawful equipment (electronic turkey call).

PAULDING COUNTY

On March 21st, Cpl. Lee Burns received a call in reference to hunting without permission on property bordering Paulding Forest Wildlife Management Area (WMA). After locating a spent shotshell wadding, blood and feathers, Cpl. Burns questioned the two hunters about their location, as both were approximately ¾ miles from the freshly posted WMA boundary. The hunters stated they had been hunting here their whole lives and did not realize they were not on the WMA. The complainant advised Cpl. Burns that he recognize the hunters as the same two he verbally warned last year for hunting without permission and wished to have them charged for hunting without permission. Cpl. Burns charged the two hunters for hunting without permission and advised them to become familiar with all WMA boundaries before hunting. The tom turkey was confiscated and donated to a deserving family. The Law Enforcement Division wants to remind hunters that you must have permission to hunt private property throughout the State and hunters must resist the urge to pursue gobbling toms across property lines.



Gobbler illegally taken from private property

FULTON COUNTY

On March 21st, Corporal Eric Brown and Ranger Mark Puig checked several baited areas in Fulton County for the opening day of Turkey Season. The Rangers located one person hunting turkey over cracked and whole kernel corn and issued him a citation for hunting big game over bait and gave him a warning for not carrying his license on his person. When asked if he knew why the Rangers were there that morning he simply responded "Yep, you got me."

Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)

DAWSON COUNTY

On March 18th, Cpl. Eddie Tompkins and Ranger Shane Brown responded to a missing persons call at Amicalola Falls State Park. Just after Ranger Brown arrived on scene a 911 call was received from resident in Gilmer County stating the missing person just walked up to the callers residence asking for help. The missing person was reunited with her loved ones a short while later.

On March 19th, RFC Mitchell Crump and Ranger Shane Brown responded to a hiker that had broken his leg while hiking on the Appalachian Trail near Nibblewill Gap. The hiker was located and assisted to an ambulance to receive treatment.

On March 19th, SGT. Steve Seitz, Cpl. Eddie Tompkins, and Ranger Shane Brown assisted a subject locate his wife along the Appalachian Trail for medical treatment. The husband had received an email from his wife stating she was very ill and need assistance.

LAKE LANIER

On March 15th, SGT. Lee Brown, RFC Barry Britt, and Ranger Shane Brown responded to a fatal boating incident near Browns Bridge. The vessel hit some exposed rocks and turned over. The incident is still under investigation by the Critical Incident Reconstruction Team (CIRT).



FRANKLIN COUNTY

On March 19th, Ranger First Class Tim Vickery received a complaint of an illegal burn on Highway 17 just north of Lavonia. Ranger Vickery, Sergeant Greg Colson and Sergeant Stan Elrod responded to the complaint and found a shop owner burning car parts. The subject was issued a citation for unlawful dumping.

MADISON COUNTY

On March 20th, RFC Shane Sartor patrolled Watson Mill State Park and checked one subject fishing. The subject was issued a warning for fishing without license.

On March 21st, RFC Shane Sartor and Sgt. Stan Elrod checked an area baited for turkeys. Two subjects were hunting over the baited area and one subject did not have a hunting or big game license. Two citations and two warnings were issued for the violations.

On March 21st, RFC Shane Sartor and Sgt. Stan Elrod checked another baited area for turkey hunters. The subjects were not over the bait but one was issued a warning for unplugged shotgun.

RABUN COUNTY

On March 21st, Corporal Derek Dillard checked a young man turkey hunting in the area of Wolf Creek. The young man had his required licenses but his shotgun did not have a plug in it. Corporal Dillard issued the young man a written warning for hunting turkey with an unplugged shotgun.

TOWNS COUNTY

On March 21st, Corporal Kevin Dyer responded to a boating incident on Lake Chatuge. 5 subjects were cruising on a pontoon boat when one subject fell over board and was struck by the vessel's prop. The subject was severely injured and flown to a trauma center. The incident is still under investigation.

UNION COUNTY

On March 21st, Corporal Kevin Dyer located two subject's trout fishing in a closed trout stream. Corporal Dyer issued citations and warnings for fishing in a closed trout stream, fishing without a license and fishing without a trout license.

WHITE COUNTY

On March 15th, RFC Anne Britt checked several fishermen on Smith Creek, Lake Unicoi and the Chattahoochee River. She warned one male fisherman for possession of unlawful equipment on an artificial stream, warned two adults for fishing without a trout license, and one for fishing without a license. RFC Britt cited one adult female for fishing in a closed stream and for fishing without a license on the Chattahoochee River. RFC Britt also warned two adult males digging for minerals in the Chattahoochee River with shovels on the Chattahoochee Wildlife Management Area.

Region III- Thomson (East Central)

OGLETHORPE COUNTY

On Sunday March 16th RFC Phillip Nelson, Cpl. Julian Wilkins and Intern Babb patrolled the Oconee River. Violations addressed during the patrol were operating a vessel without registration and safety equipment violations.

CLARKE COUNTY

On March 16th RFC Tim Butler checked several municipal fishing areas. Numerous violations were documented for fishing without a license, operating a vessel without personal flotation devices, and operating a vessel without registration.

OCONEE COUNTY

On March 21st RFC Tim Butler and RFC Phillip Nelson completed an investigation of a large buck that was poached in July of 2014. The buck was known locally as “Bucky” and would frequently allow people to stop and photograph it alongside the road. One subject was charged with hunting deer at night, hunting big game from a public road, and hunting from a motor vehicle. Additional charges are being filed against another subject involved in the incident.



WILKES COUNTY

On March 21st Sgt. Brian Carter, Cpl. Mark Patterson, and Intern Babb checked areas known to be baited for turkey. Eight subjects were charged for hunting big game over bait, two for hunting without a big game license, and one individual was found to be hunting turkey with an unplugged shotgun.

ELBERT COUNTY

On March 21st Cpl. Julian Wilkins patrolled for turkey hunting and fishing activity. A non-resident hunter was charged for hunting without a big game license and two subjects were charged for fishing on a courtesy dock that was posted to prohibit fishing.

BURKE COUNTY

RFC Jeff Billips located numerous baited turkey areas throughout the county during the week of March 14. He also investigated a complaint of artifact digging without the landowner's permission. On March 21, Sgt. Boswell and RFC Billips returned to the areas that were baited and apprehended two poachers. The poachers were written citations for hunting big game over bait. The artifact digging is still under investigation.

RICHMOND COUNTY

RFC Matherly attended SONAR Training in Region 3 March 18-19, 2015. The Sonar officers trained with the ROV (Remote Operated Vehicle). The officers practiced with fine motor movements of the ROV. They were tasked with exercises such as picking up a golf ball under water and placing it inside a pipe without turning it over. They also had to set the ball on a tee and then pick it back up off the tee without knocking it off.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

On March 21, RFC Matherly checked a club in Jefferson County which had three feeders actively scattering corn. RFC Matherly checked the baited areas for illegal turkey hunting, no contact was made.

RFC Matherly also checked three hunters off of Walden Pond Road in Jefferson County that had killed a gobbler earlier in the morning. All three hunters were found to be in compliance of all laws which pertained to them.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

On March 21, RFC Matherly and Cpl. Payne checked two baited locations in Washington County. No contact was made on the baited sites. The two officers checked two other hunters in Washington County and received tips on other locations of illegal hunting.

GLASCOCK COUNTY

On March 22nd, RFC Brian Adams and RFC Robert Timmerman apprehended one subject for hunting big game over bait. The subject was cited and released.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

On March 21st, RFC Brian Adams and RFC Robert Timmerman apprehended two subjects hunting big game over bait and using an electronic call to hunt turkeys. The subjects were cited and released.

LINCOLN COUNTY

On March 21st, Cpl. Ryan Swain and Ranger Michael Madden apprehended two subjects hunting big game over bait. Two more subjects were apprehended hunting turkeys with buckshot and unplugged shotguns. The subjects were cited and released.

On March 21st, Cpl. Ryan Swain and Ranger Michael Madden responded to an in progress hunting without permission complaint in Eastern Lincoln County. Two subjects were apprehended and charged with hunting without permission.

On March 21st, Cpl. Ryan Swain, RFC Brian Adams, RFC Robert Timmerman, and Ranger Michael Madden conducted a concentrated vessel patrol on Clarks Hill Lake. Four subjects were cited for fishing without a license and a boat incident was investigated. The incident later was determined not to be a boating incident.

TALIAFERRO COUNTY

On March 21st, Sgt. Doyte Chaffin and Cpl. Brian Hobbins apprehended one subject for hunting big game over bait and hunting without a license. The subject was cited and released.

GREENE COUNTY

Cpl. Derrell Worth cited three subjects for operating a vessel with insufficient PFD'S and one subject for operating a vessel above idle speed within 100' of a developed shoreline.

NEWTON COUNTY

Sgt. John Harwell taught an educational program for the Tri-County area at the FFA/FHA camp. Sgt. Harwell participated in a career day speaking about the Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division. Roughly 300 students participated in the event.

HANCOCK COUNTY

Cpl. David Allen and Ranger Jason Harrison worked the opening weekend of turkey season in Hancock County. Cpl. Allen and Ranger Harrison cited two individuals for hunting turkeys over bait during the opening weekend.

Region IV- Macon (West Central)

BALDWIN COUNTY

On the afternoon of March 21st, Ranger Matt Johnson located 2 people fishing without permission on a county pond. The 2 suspects were charged with fishing without permission.

COWETA COUNTY

On March 17th, Cpl. Travis Sweat and Sgt. Brent Railey responded to a complaint of a goose being killed in a neighborhood in Sharpsburg. Cpl. Sweat spoke with the complainant and he and Sgt. Railey spoke with the violator. The violator admitted to shooting a goose in his yard with a pellet gun. He was issued a citation for hunting out of season.

HENRY COUNTY

On Sunday, March 15th, RFC Kevin Godbee patrolled Tussahaw Reservoir looking for fishing violations. He issued three written warnings for fishing without a license.

JONES COUNTY

On the afternoon of March 21st, RFC Jeremy Reese responded to a complaint of possible hunting without permission. RFC Reese located the hunters and after further investigation it was determined the hunters were walking through private property to gain access to WMA land. The suspects were charged with criminal trespass.

LAMAR COUNTY

On Saturday, March 21st, RFC Keith Page and K9 Drake answered a hunting without permission complaint. Once he arrived to the scene, Page spoke with the property owner, who stated that he just watched a man shoot a turkey on his property. The land owner then led Page and Drake back to the area where the man was seen shooting the turkey. RFC Page then deployed K9 Drake to locate the exact location of the kill. After only a few minutes of searching, K9 Drake gave a positive alert on 3 spent shotgun shells. RFC Page collected the spent shells and then deployed K9 Drake again to track the suspect back to his location. K9 Drake tracked for over 600 yards back to a residence. RFC Page met with the homeowner who admitted that he and a friend had crossed the property line to finish off a turkey they had shot at and wounded on his property from a nearby turkey blind. While K9 Drake tracked back towards the house, RFC Page noticed a large amount of cracked corn that had been spread on the ground on the violator's property. The cracked corn and another spent shotgun shell were also near the turkey blind on the violator's property. RFC Page got the homeowner to call his hunting partner back to the scene. After speaking to RFC Page, both hunters admitted to hunting over bait and admitted that they crossed over the property line to continue chasing the turkey. RFC Page confiscated the turkey and returned it to the land owner.



MERIWETHER COUNTY

On Saturday, March 21st, Sgt. Brent Railey and Cpl. Keith Waddell worked a hunting without permission complaint in western Meriwether County near Odessadale. The hunter was given a verbal warning to not go back onto the property per the landowners request and issued a written warning for hunting without license on person.

MUSCOGEE COUNTY

On March 15th, Cpl. Mitch Oliver patrolled the Chattahoochee River in Columbus by boat checking fishing and boating activity. Cpl. Oliver checked approximately 25 boats and 45 fishermen during the patrol. Cpl. Oliver issued 8 citations for resident and non-resident fishing without a license, as well as 6 written warnings for the same violations.

On March 21st, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen and Cpl. Mitch Oliver performed a boating patrol on the Chattahoochee River for fishing/boating activity. The officers issued 6 citations for fishing without a license, 5 warnings for fishing without a license, 1 warning for operating a vessel with insufficient pfd's, 1 warning for operating a vessel with expired registration, and 1 warning for operating a vessel without lights during hours of darkness.

PIKE COUNTY

On Saturday, March 21st, Sgt. Brent Railey checked a baited area in Pike County near the Flint River. The bait had been located earlier in the week by Cpl. Travis Sweat. Sgt. Railey located one hunter in a blind with turkey hunting gear and several decoys within shotgun range set up in the bait (sunflowers). Sgt. Railey issued a citation for hunting big game over bait to the hunter.

On Saturday, March 21st, in the evening hours Cpl. Travis Sweat checked a baited turkey blind he had found the week prior near the Upson County line. Cpl. Sweat located one hunter hunting over cracked corn and issued a citation for hunting big game over bait.

On Saturday, March 21st, Cpl. Travis Sweat issued a written warning to a fisherman fishing in the Flint River without a license.

PUTNAM COUNTY

On the afternoon of March 21st, Cpl. Lynn Stanford checked the fishing area at Cedar Creek and located 2 fishermen. One suspect was charged with fishing without a license.

SPALDING COUNTY

On March 17th, Cpl. Travis Sweat responded to a complaint of fishing without permission. Cpl. Sweat found two fishermen there who did not have permission to fish in the pond. Both were issued citations for fishing without permission.

TALBOT COUNTY

On March 21st, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen was checking for turkey hunting activity when he located a truck parked on private property. Cpl. Bolen located corn in the back of the truck and decided to find the hunter. The hunter was located in a ground blind hunting on a food plot. After a search of the area, Cpl. Bolen located cracked corn, milo, and sun flower seeds approximately 30 yards from the ground blind. The hunter was issued a citation for hunting big game over bait.

UPSON COUNTY

On Saturday, March 21st, Cpl. Travis Sweat and Cpl. Keith Waddell checked several baited turkey blinds on the Pike/Upson county line that Cpl. Sweat had located earlier in the week. The blinds were baited with bird seed and cracked corn. The rangers found several hunters and issued three citations for hunting big game over bait, two citations for hunting with an unplugged shotgun and one warning for hunting big game over bait.

Region V- Albany (Southwest)

MITCHELL/COLQUITT

On the morning of March 17th, Ranger Eric White and Sergeant David Ruddell located an unoccupied vehicle parked in an area known to the officers for turkey hunting violations. The officers then located a subject turkey hunting with bow and arrow along a creek bottom. The subject was cited for hunting out of season and hunting without proper licenses.

THOMAS COUNTY

On March 21st, Sgt. David Ruddell and Ranger Eric White checked several areas previously determined by the officers to be baited for turkeys. No hunters were present when checked by the officers at daylight but upon rechecking the areas several hours later, two subjects were located in a ground blind and hunting over a heavily baited area. One subject was charged for hunting big game over bait.

DOOLY COUNTY

On March 21st, Cpl. Bob Holley and Ranger Jay Lewis were patrolling the Flint River WMA when they encountered an individual who had been turkey hunting on the area. An inspection of his hunting equipment revealed that he was hunting with an unplugged shotgun and using a cellular phone application with a blue tooth speaker to call turkeys. The subject was cited for hunting with an unplugged shotgun and for hunting with an unlawful device.

CRISP COUNTY

On March 21st, Cpl. Bob Holley and Ranger Jay Lewis cited an individual for turkey hunting in an area baited with peanuts and corn.

RANDOLPH COUNTY

On March 21st, Sgt. Butch Potter cited an individual for hunting turkeys in an area baited with shelled corn and grain sorghum.

CLAY COUNTY

On March 21st, RFC Jim Atchley located and cited two turkey hunters for hunting over bait.

On March 21st, Rangers Fogle, Carroll and Atchley conducted a night boating patrol on Lake Walter F. George to address fishing and boating violations.

Region VI- Metter (Southeast)

APPLING COUNTY

On March 21st, Corporal Chase Altman and Corporal Kevin Joyce patrolled areas known to be baited for turkey. Violations for hunting big game over bait, hunting without licenses, and hunting with unplugged shotguns were documented.

WARE COUNTY

On March 21st, Corporal Jason Shipes and Sergeant Patrick Dupree checked boating and fishing activity along the Suwannee River Sill. Cpl. Shipes and Sgt. Dupree encountered a number of individuals boating and fishing in the area. Numerous boaters and anglers were checked. A citation for operating a vessel with improper personal flotation devices was issued and a boating safety manual was provided for future reference.

CLINCH & ECHOLS COUNTY

On March 15th, Ranger Judd Sears and Ranger Sam Williams patrolled the Suwannee River near Fargo. Numerous boaters were encountered with one violation of insufficient life jackets being documented. The officers observed a boater having mechanical problems with his motor and assisted him in returning to the landing. Later in the day, the officers received information of a boater who had ran out of gas near the state line. The officers were able to obtain a can of gas and delivered it to the stranded boater. The boater later returned to the boat landing safely.

CLINCH COUNTY

On March 15th, Sergeant Patrick Dupree & Ranger Daniel North were checking boaters at the Fargo Landing on the Suwannee River when a vehicle travelling on US Hwy 441 came to an abrupt stop near the landing and a female exited the vehicle, arguing with the driver, and began walking away. The vehicle sped away but returned without stopping and drove into the landing parking lot. As the driver of the vehicle exited the parking lot he rapidly accelerated and began operating the vehicle in a reckless manner. The officers observed the driver spin the tires as he drove away from the landing and again as he sped towards the town of Fargo. The officers initiated a stop of the driver for reckless driving and discovered he was under 21 years of age and driving under the influence. He also possessed an open container of beer and several cans of beer in a cooler. The driver was placed under arrest for DUI and transported to Clinch County jail. The DUI and related traffic violations were turned over to Georgia State Patrol at the jail.

On March 21st, Rangers Judd Sears and Daniel North conducted patrols of the Headlight Road area when they encountered individuals training hounds. A loaded shotgun was found in the front seat of one of the trucks along with other turkey hunting gear. The operator of the vehicle advised that he had used it while hunting turkey earlier that morning. The shotgun was loaded with buckshot which is illegal to use while hunting turkey. Both individuals were also advised that deer could not be run with dogs even for training purposes outside of deer season and a violation of hunting turkeys with illegal ammunition was documented.

BACON COUNTY

On March 21st, while checking previously-located baited sites, Corporal Mark Pool located a poacher with his turkey decoys set in the middle of a bait site. A citation was issued for hunting big game over bait.



SCREVEN COUNTY

On March 21st, Corporal Shaymus McNeely Encountered a subject illegally hunting turkeys in an area that had been previously baited with cracked corn. A citation was issued for hunting big game over bait.

JENKINS COUNTY

On March 21st, Corporal Mike Wilcox patrolled Jenkins County for turkey hunting activity. Cpl. Wilcox checked one turkey hunter. On the evening of the 21st, Cpl. Wilcox and Sgt. Don Dasher patrolled Jenkins County for boating and fishing activity. One boat was checked on the Ogeechee River. While on patrol that evening Cpl. Wilcox encountered an individual fishing in a private pond. Cpl. Wilcox documented a violation for fishing without permission.

EMANUEL COUNTY

On March 17th, Corporal Wilcox received a complaint about a picture from Facebook depicting a young boy holding a gun and a dead Great Blue Heron. Cpl. Wilcox managed to track down the parents of the child. The child was only ten years old. Cpl. Wilcox explained to the boy and the parents that it was illegal to kill or possess a protected species. No charges were made.

BULLOCH COUNTY

On March 21st, Corporal Eddie Akins and Ranger First Class Debbie Brannen patrolled the Bulloch and Evans County line for turkey hunting activity. The officers checked two turkey hunters. No violations were detected or documented.

EFFINGHAM COUNTY

On March 21st, Sergeant Don Dasher and Ranger Jordan Crawford patrolled Effingham County looking for turkey hunting activity. Several hunters were checked with no violations documented.

LOWNDES

On March 21st, Sergeant Morty Wood and Ranger First Class Keith McDonald patrolled Lowndes County on opening day of turkey season. An individual was located who was hunting illegally with an unplugged shotgun was issued a citation. The Rangers also encountered a group of nonresident hunters with license violations.

DODGE COUNTY

On March 20th, Ranger First Class Allen Mills conducted a vessel patrol at the Dodge County Public Fishing Area. RFC Mills inspected eleven vessels for safety equipment compliance and twenty six anglers for license and regulation compliance. Six violations were documented for fishing without a license and other provisions on the PFA.

TELFAIR COUNTY

On March 21st, Sergeant James McLaughlin found two hunters illegally hunting turkeys over an area that was baited with a mixture of cracked corn and bird seed. Violations were documented on the two poachers for hunting big game over bait.

On March 21st, Sergeant James McLaughlin also responded to a complaint by a citizen that some individuals were possibly hog hunting without permission. When Sgt. McLaughlin arrived to the area, the subjects were gone.

LAURENS COUNTY

On March 17th, Ranger First Class Rodney Horne responded to an animal in distress complaint that a vulture landed in a residential yard with a bear trap attached to its leg. RFC Horne responded to the location, captured the vulture, and removed a 1.5 Victor Steel trap from its leg. RFC Horne then transferred the bird to a state licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

On March 21st Corporal Dan Stiles and Captain Scott Klingel patrolled for turkey hunting violations. The officers made contact with five hunters and performed license and equipment checks. The officers documented several violations including hunting big game (Turkey) over bait, hunting without a hunting license, hunting with unplugged shotgun, and non-resident hunting without non-resident hunting license, and non-resident hunting without non-resident big game license.

On March 21st at approximately 11:00 p.m. Corporal Stiles was dispatched to a report of an overturned vessel on the Oconee River. The vessel and three subjects were located and transported to a nearby boat landing. One victim was transported to a local hospital for exhaustion and possible complications from a pre-existing health condition. The other two victims were unharmed.

WHEELER COUNTY

On March 18th, Ranger First Class Rodney Horne assisted one of our state licensed wildlife rehabilitators with the release of two Sand hill Cranes, which had been rehabilitated and ready to be released back into the wild.



WILCOX COUNTY

On March 21st, Corporal John A Stokes and Ranger First Class Rodney Horne checked several hunting clubs that were baited for turkey. Two suspects were located and charged for hunting with unplugged shotguns.

Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)

No activity to report.