

Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report
May 3 – May 9, 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)

BARTOW COUNTY

On the night of May 4th, Cpl. Byron Young and RFC Brooks Varnell responded to Red Top Mt State Park to assist with an injured hiker. A female walking on the trail fell and injured her head. The female was unable to walk and 911 was called. The officers assisted Bartow County Fire / Rescue and the Bartow County Sheriff's Office locate and remove the injured hiker from the wooded area. Bartow County's special ATV backboard attachment was used to transport the injured female on the trail. The female was transported to Kennestone Hospital for treatment.

On May 6th, Cpl. Byron Young and RFC Zack Hardy concluded a month long investigation on a subject turkey hunting without permission. The officers received several complaints on a Cartersville hunter trespassing on two separate pieces of property. On the morning of May 6, RFC Hardy located the hunter off Brown Farm Rd. hunting on yet another property that he did not have permission to hunt. The two officers interviewed the hunter and issued him a citation for hunting without permission. The officers addressed the hunter's activities this turkey season and urged him to obtain written permission in the future.

PICKENS COUNTY

On May 7th, 8th, 9th DNR Law Enforcement Rangers assisted with the 27th Annual Pickens County Fishing Rodeo sponsored by the Pickens County Sportsman Club and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The fishing event is held over three days starting on the first day with special needs children. The second day is dedicated to senior citizens in assisted living facilities, and the final event on day three is open to all children under the age of 16. Over 4,000 trout are stocked in Long Swamp Creek for the event. Nearly 1,000 people participated over the three days.

Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)

No activity to report.

Region III- Thomson (East Central)

COLUMBIA COUNTY

On May 5th, Sgt. Doyte Chaffin, Sgt. Brian Carter, Cpl. Brian Hobbins, Cpl. Mark Patterson, RFC Richard Tanner, and Ranger Michael Madden recovered the body of a drowning victim that was involved in a boating incident on May 1st. The body was recovered by Rangers with the use of sonar and DNR's underwater robot.

LINCOLN COUNTY

On May 8th, Cpl. Ryan Swain assisted with a Paralyzed Veterans Fishing Event off of Chamberlains Ferry Rd.

LAKE OCONEE

On the weekend of May 9-10th on Lake Oconee, Sgt. John Harwell, Cpl. David Allen, Ranger Jason Harrison patrolled Lake Oconee for boating and fishing activity. The Rangers issued citations for towing skiers w/out an observer, towing skiers w/out PFD's, children under the age of 12 in a moving vessel w/out PFD's, and towing skiers after hours.

Region IV- Macon (West Central)

HARRIS COUNTY

On May 8th, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen attended career day at Mulberry Creek Elementary School. Cpl. Bolen spoke to 5 separate 1st grade classes about the functions of Conservation Rangers as well as hunting/boating safety.

HEARD COUNTY

On May 9th, Ranger First Class Russell Epps was patrolling the banks of the Chattahoochee River south of Franklin. Seventeen fishing licenses and two boats were checked for compliance. Two warnings were issued for fishing without a license and one individual was arrested for an outstanding warrant.

PUTNAM COUNTY

On the afternoon of May 7th, Cpl. Lynn Stanford patrolled Wallace Dam. Cpl. Stanford checked 2 fishermen in the hazardous area below the dam and 2 citations were issued for operating a vessel in a boating safety zone and failure to wear a PFD in a hazardous area.

On the afternoon of May 8th, Cpl. Stanford checked a pond he had received complaints about fishing without permission. Two subjects were located at the pond and citations were issued for fishing without permission.

On the evening of May 9th, Ranger Matt Johnson, RFC Jeremy Reese, Cpl. Lynn Stanford and Sgt. Bo Kelly patrolled Lake Sinclair. Numerous boats were stopped and citations and warnings were issued for boating violations, as well as fishing without a license. Two subjects were also arrested for giving false information to an officer and for outstanding warrants.

Region V- Albany (Southwest)

DOUGHERTY COUNTY

On May 3rd, Cpl. Greg Wade patrolled Lake Worth to address recent complaints of boaters violating the “No Wake/Idle Speed Only” portion of the Kinchafoonee Creek. After stopping a vessel found to be violating the regulated area, Cpl. Wade determined that the operator was under the influence of alcohol. The subject was arrested for operating a vessel under the influence and violating the “Idle Speed” restriction.

THOMAS COUNTY

On May 9th, Sgt. David Ruddell received a complaint of possible alligator poaching via the “Ranger Hotline”. Sgt. Ruddell and Ranger Eric White responded to the reported area, and after several hours of surveillance spotted a boat being operated without any navigation lights displayed. The Rangers interviewed the three occupants of the boat and determined they were not poaching alligators, but were in violation of several boating safety laws. The fishermen were cited for operating a boat without lights, insufficient lifejackets, and fishing without licenses.

Region VI- Metter (Southeast)

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

On May 9, Cpl. Kevin Joyce and Cpl. Chase Altman conducted a boating safety patrol on the Oconee River. Multiple vessels were checked and violations were documented for, fishing without a license, operating a vessel with insufficient PFD's, and operating a vessel without registration.

WHEELER COUNTY

On the night of May 9, Sgt. James McLaughlin and Cpl. Kevin Joyce responded to a stranded boater on the Oconee River just south of the Hwy 46. Both the vessel and three occupants were returned to safety.

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY

On May 9, Cpl. Kevin Joyce patrolled the Bullard Creek WMA shooting range for possible activity. Three subjects were checked and violations were documented for entering a designated area with a GORP pass.

JENKINS COUNTY

On May 3rd and 4th Corporal Mike Wilcox patrolled river landings on the Ogeechee River for fishing and boating activity. No violations were observed.

BULLOCH COUNTY

On the morning of May 3rd, Cpl. Eddie Akins patrolled areas along the Bulloch and Bryan County line. His efforts resulted in one turkey hunter being checked and one violation being documented. The violation was for hunting with an unplugged shotgun.

WHEELER COUNTY

On May 5th, Ranger First Class Rodney Horne conducted an area check at Little Ocmulgee State Park looking for boating and fishing violations. RFC Horne checked four people for fishing licenses and creel limits on Little Ocmulgee State Parks Lake. No violations were documented.

EFFINGHAM COUNTY

On the afternoon of May 3rd, Cpl. Eddie Akins checked Oliver Bridge Landing and Steel Bridge Landing. His efforts resulted in one boat being checked and three violations being documented. The violations were for: operating a vessel without registration, operating a vessel with insufficient number of PFD's and allowing underage person to ride in moving vessel without wearing a PFD.

On May 6th, Cpl. Eddie Akins checked Steel Bridge for boating and fishing activity. His efforts resulted in two fishermen being checked and two violations being documented. The violations were for fishing without a license.

On May 9th 2015, Ranger Jordan Crawford and Sergeant Don Dasher patrolled the Ogeechee River looking for fishing and boating activity. Several boats were checked with no violations documented.

SCREVEN COUNTY

On May 9, Corporal Shaymus McNeely conducted a vessel patrol on the Savannah River from Millers Lake to Stoney Bluff. Numerous boats and fisherman were checked and violations were documented for unserviceable life jackets and registration issues. In the Burtons Ferry area, Cpl. McNeely observed a violation of the 100' law when a boat sped under the US 301 Bridge. Upon stopping the boat, Cpl. McNeely detected a strong odor of alcohol coming from the operator and noticed that he could barely stand up. Cpl. McNeely administered a battery of standardized field sobriety exercises and determined there was probable cause to arrest the suspect for boating under the influence. The suspect was taken into custody and transported to the Screven County Jail where he was charged with BUI and operating a vessel above idle speed within 100' of a bridge.

LAURENS COUNTY

On May 4th, Corporal Dan Stiles and Ranger First Class Rodney Horne conducted an evening vessel patrol on the Oconee River. One vessel was checked for boating safety equipment and registration compliance and two fishing licenses were checked. One violation for operating a vessel without Coast Guard approved personal floatation devices (life jackets) was documented.

On May 9th, Corporal Dan Stiles and Corporal John Stokes assisted by Sergeant James McLaughlin conducted a vessel patrol on 20 miles of the Oconee River. Twenty vessels were checked for registration and boating safety equipment compliance and twenty-two anglers were checked for license compliance. Four violations for various registration violations were documented and one violation for operating a vessel without Coast Guard approved personal floatation devices was documented.

On May 9th, Corporal Dan Stiles conducted a night patrol at a boat landing. Two subjects were arrested for operating vessels while under the influence (alcohol). One violation for operating a vessel with insufficient personal floatation devices (life jackets) was also documented.

On May 3rd, Sergeant James McLaughlin, Corporal Dan Stiles, Ranger First Class Allen Mills, and Ranger First Class Rodney Horne conducted a concentrated patrol at the Hugh M. Gillis Public Fishing Area. Two vessels were checked for registration and boating safety equipment and eighteen anglers were checked for license compliance. Two violations for fishing on a PFA without a Wildlife Management Area license and one violation for operating a vessel without Coast Guard approved personal floatation devices (life jackets) were documented.

COOK COUNTY

On May 3rd, while performing a vessel patrol at Reed Bingham State Park, Cpl. Tommy Daughtrey checked numerous boaters and fishermen. Violations documented were consuming alcohol on a state park and towing a skier with a PWC w/o a mirror or observer.

BERRIEN COUNTY

On May 3rd, Cpl. Tommy Daughtrey documented several violations while performing a patrol at Paradise PFA. The violations documented were fishing on a PFA w/o a WMA license.

ECHOLS COUNTY

On May 8th, Ranger Daniel North and Ranger Judd Sears conducted a vessel patrol of the Alapaha River in Statenville. Several vessels were checked during the day and were found to be in compliance with boating and fishing laws and regulations. Rangers North and Sears encountered one vessel on the river at full power with two children under 13 years of age on board that were not wearing life jackets. One of the children was leaning over the front of boat with arms hanging down in the water. There was only one life jacket and one type IV floatation device on the boat. Violations of operating a vessel with insufficient personal floatation devices (PFD's), allowing underage child to ride in moving vessel without PFD's, allowing person to ride bow or gunwale, and operating vessel with expired registration were documented.

CLINCH COUNTY

On May 3rd, Ranger Daniel North was conducting vessel patrol of the Suwannee River near Fargo. Ranger North encountered many vessels and fisherman on and along the river. Two vessels of about fifteen checked during the day did not have any life jackets on board. Violations of operating a vessel without Coast Guard approved personal floatation devices were documented. Two individuals could not produce a fishing license. Violations of fishing without a license and fishing without a license on person were documented.

WARE COUNTY

On May 3rd, Corporal Jason Shipes conducted a vessel patrol on the Satilla River. Cpl. Shipes encountered a number of vessels and fisherman during this patrol. Cpl. Shipes checked safety equipment, checked for impaired operators and required licenses. Cpl. Shipes issued citations for fishing without license and operating with insufficient personal floatation devices. Later that same day, Ranger Sam Williams met Cpl. Shipes at the Jamestown Landing and conducted a night time patrol of the river. Several more vessels were contacted during this patrol. One additional citation was issued for operating a vessel without any personal floatation devices onboard.



Ranger Williams navigating the Satilla River on night patrol.

On May 6th, Corporal Jason Shipes and Ranger Judd Sears were checking popular fishing areas along Kettle Creek. During their patrol several subjects were checked for license requirements. One citation was issued for a non-resident fishing without the proper license.

On May 9th, Ranger Daniel North and Ranger Judd Sears conducted a vessel patrol of the Suwannee River in the area of the Suwannee River Sill. Multiple vessels and anglers were compliance checked. One vessel had three occupants and but no personal floatation devices (PFDs) on board. Violations of operating a vessel without Coast Guard approved PFDs were documented. Verbal guidance was given to two of the individuals who did not have their fishing license on their person.

CHARLTON COUNTY

On May 6th, Corporal Jason Shipes and Ranger Judd Sears received a complaint from the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in reference to several individuals collecting live cypress tree seedlings within the refuge, which is a violation of federal law and constitutes a theft under federal statutes. Cpl. Shipes learned that some individuals were observed with a number of young cypress trees that had been pulled up and placed into some type of container to be taken from the refuge. Cpl. Shipes and Ranger Sears responded to the camping platform located in the area of Coffee Bay in an attempt to talk with the subjects. Officers made contact and after a brief investigation, retrieved the items taken illegally from the refuge. The evidence was documented and turned over to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for prosecution.



Cypress trees illegally removed from Okefenokee NWR.

On May 8th, Ranger Judd Sears patrolled Suwannee River Sill recreation area for fishing activity. Multiple anglers were inspected for fishing license requirements and creel limits. Ranger Sears encountered two subjects fishing off the spillway during this patrol and it was found that one of the subjects was fishing without a license. One citation for fishing without a license was issued.

Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)

No activity to report.