

# Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

**Weekly Report**  
**April 24 – April 30, 2016**

**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 April 24<sup>th</sup>, RFC Zack Hardy responded to a call of a stolen vessel near Red Top Mt State Park on Allatoona Lake. RFC Hardy located the vessel near Bethany Bridge and contacted the Bartow County Sheriff's Office. The vessel was confirmed stolen off the lake. RFC Hardy was able to locate the owner and assist in getting it returned.

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Byron Young and RFC Bart Hendrix patrolled Allatoona Lake. The officers issued 5 citations and warnings for boating violations. The officers also responded to a stranded boater call with engine problems. The officers towed the vessel to the Clark Creek boat ramp.

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Brooks Varnell and Cpl. Byron Young responded to Pine Log WMA to a call of a wildfire on the area. The officers met with Georgia Forestry and Bartow County Fire near the dove field off Oak Street. Several fire units were on scene attempting to control the fire. The cause of the fire is unknown at this time.

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Byron Young and RFC Zack Hardy were on patrol on Allatoona Lake and received a call of a missing juvenile on a PWC. The parents of the juvenile stated that their son had not been seen in over an hour. The two Rangers and US Army Corps of Engineer Rangers began searching the north end of Allatoona Lake. Two hours later the juvenile was located. He had engine problems and was stranded.

### **CHEROKEE COUNTY**

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Byron Young and RFC Zack Hardy responded to a call of possible missing person in Little River on Allatoona Lake. Woodstock Police Dept. received information that a subject jumped from a bridge over Little River. The officers searched the river until 1:00 a.m. with no success. The search was called off, while investigators continue to work the case.

### **COBB COUNTY**

On April 25<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Brooks Varnell and Cpl. Byron Young worked a sportsman event / dinner at Piney Grove Baptist Church. The officers ran the DNR LED fishing simulator for the guest.

### **FULTON COUNTY**

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Rangers First Class 1 Shane Brown and Mark Puig patrolled the Chattahoochee River via patrol boat. Numerous fishing licenses and boats were checked and several citations were issued for various fishing and boating violations.



## **DOUGLAS COUNTY**

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Conservation Sergeant Eric Brown, Ranger First Class 2 Chad Cox, and Ranger First Class 1 Mark Puig patrolled Sweetwater Creek State Park. The Rangers checked a dozen fishermen and issued several citations for various violations. The Rangers even encountered a surprised angler who caught a trout that was recently stocked for a fishing event.



## **Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)**

### **HABERSHAM COUNTY**

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, RFC Joe Hill received a complaint in reference to a subject fishing without permission on private property on the Soque River. The Ranger responded to the complaint and issued the subject a citation for fishing without permission.

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Stan Elrod and RFC Joe Hill patrolled Lake Russell WMA for hunting and fishing activity. The Rangers found one subject that had parked their vehicle in a field marked as closed to vehicles and foot travel only. The subject confirmed that they did see the signs stating closed road, but did not think it was big deal. The Rangers issued the subject a citation for driving in unauthorized areas of a WMA.

### **STEPHENS COUNTY**

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Stan Elrod and RFC Joe Hill patrolled Panther Creek for trout fishing activity. The Rangers found one subject fishing without a license and fishing without a trout license for trout. The subject was issued a citation for fishing without a license and a warning for fishing without a trout license.

### **RABUN COUNTY**

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Beth Gilbert issued two citations to two adult males at Black Rock Lake at Black Rock Mountain State Park. One adult was consuming alcohol (beer) on park property, while the other adult was fishing without a license.

## **UNION COUNTY**

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, at approximately 1630 hours, Sgt. Steve Seitz overheard radio traffic from Union county 911 about three lost hikers on Coopers Creek WMA. Sgt. Seitz was headed back into Union County and advised Union County dispatch that he would be responding to the WMA. Dispatch said he was the closest unit to their location. Dispatch also told him the hikers had left Vogel State Park early that morning and became lost and did not know where they were or how to get back to the park. Dispatch pinged their cell phone and told Sgt. Seitz it was showing them off Duncan Ridge Road on Coopers Creek WMA. Sgt. Seitz responded to Duncan Ridge Road and located the three hikers approximately three miles from Hwy 180 on Duncan Ridge Road. The hikers were not injured. Sgt. Seitz gave them a ride back to their vehicle which was parked in the main parking lot on Vogel State Park. The three hikers said they had begun hiking the Coosa Back Country Trail earlier that morning and when the trail intersected with another trail, they went the wrong way at the intersection and hiked away from Vogel State Park. They decided to call for help after four hours of trying to get back to the Coosa Back Country trail and became exhausted and could not go any further.

## **Region III- Thomson (East Central)**

### **OGLETHORPE COUNTY**

On April 24, RFC Phillip Nelson assisted the Oglethorpe Co. Sheriff's Office with three subjects who were fishing on the Broad River and did not have a license. After further investigation a pistol, a Taser, two bags of marijuana and a set of scales were confiscated. Violations documented were fishing without a license and further charges are pending thru the Oglethorpe County Sheriff's Office.

### **ELBERT COUNTY**

On April 24, CPL Julian Wilkins and RFC Phillip Nelson patrolled Lake Russell boat ramps, Wildlife Management areas and other known fishing areas in Elbert Co. Violations documented were fishing without license, fishing without license while suspended.

### **LAKE OCONEE**

On April 29, Sgt. John Harwell and Cpl. David Allen patrolled Lake Oconee for boating violations. The Rangers stopped several vessels for violation of a no wake zone, riding the gunwale of a vessel, and violation of rules of the road.

### **HANCOCK COUNTY**

On April 29, Sgt. John Harwell encountered a fallen tree blocking the roadway in Hancock County. Sgt. Harwell used his issued chain saw to remove the debris and clear the roadway.

### **JEFFERSON COUNTY**

On April 25, RFC Matherly assisted with an investigation of a possible stolen boat with South Carolina DNR. RFC Matherly was contacted about a boat in Jefferson County that had been bought off of Craig's List that was possibly stolen out of North Augusta, SC. RFC found that the HIN and the motor serial number had been removed from the vessel. After locating the hidden HIN on the boat and the hidden serial number on the boat motor, the information was passed along to an investigator with SC DNR. It was found that the boat had not been stolen.

On April 30, RFC Matherly assisted RFC Crawley with a K-9 demonstration at the Columbia County Fair Grounds.

### **RICHMOND COUNTY**

On April 24, Cpl. Ben Payne and Sgt. Max Boswell patrolled Richmond County for fishing activity. They patrolled the Savannah River Lock and Dam and Phinizy WMA. Several fishing licenses were checked with one warning issued. They also investigated a fishing without permission complaint from earlier in the week. After identifying the violator, they learned that he was also wanted for manufacturing methamphetamine by Richmond Sheriff's office. The investigation is ongoing at this time.

While patrolling back to his residence late in the afternoon, Cpl. Payne responded to a GSP unit that was in a foot pursuit of a suspect near I-20 and Washington Road. Upon arriving on scene, Cpl. Payne made contact with the trooper involved and assisted with tracking the suspect. After a short track Cpl. Payne and a Richmond County deputy located the suspect in a wooded area and arrested him. A small bag of marijuana was also discovered in the suspect's car. He was charged with DUI, Fleeing from law enforcement, possession of marijuana, expired tag and suspended license.

### **BURKE COUNTY**

On Saturday, April 24, Ranger First Class Grant Matherly and Ranger First Class Jeff Billips checked areas known to be baited for turkeys. No violators were poaching at these areas. The rangers checked boaters and fishermen on the Ogeechee River.

On Friday, April 29, RFC Billips patrolled Yuchi, Mead Farm, and Alexander WMA's for turkey hunters. RFC Billips encountered an elderly landowner walking on a county road. The landowner had gotten turned around while walking his property along the Savannah River. RFC Billips returned the landowner to his vehicle. RFC Billips checked boaters and fishermen on Brier Creek and the Savannah River.

On Saturday, April 30, RFC Matherly and RFC Billips patrolled and checked turkey hunters on Di-Lane Plantation WMA. RFC Billips checked a fishing without permission complaint.

### **LINCOLN COUNTY**

On April 26<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Ryan Swain and Rfc. Robert Timmerman conducted a concentrated patrol of Cherokee Park on Clarks Hill Lake. Two subjects were apprehended fishing without having a fishing license. The two subjects were issued written warnings and directed to purchase fishing licenses.

### **COLUMBIA COUNTY**

On April 28<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Doyte Chaffin, Cpl. Ben Payne, Rfc. Robert Timmerman, and Ranger Michael Madden conducted a concentrated vessel patrol on the Savannah River. The Rangers were working a marine event out of Riverside Park. Over 1000 vessels participated in the event. No violations were detected.

## **Region IV- Macon (West Central)**

### **BALDWIN COUNTY**

On the afternoon of April 24<sup>th</sup>, RFC Michael Crawley and Cpl. Bubba Stanford patrolled the Sinclair tailrace along the Oconee River. One group of fishermen received warnings and citations for insufficient PFD's as well as not wearing PFD's in a hazardous area. A parked vehicle at the ramp was suspicious to the officers and they made contact with the occupants. A search of the vehicle resulted in several grams of methamphetamine being recovered. The incident is still under investigation.

### **HOUSTON COUNTY**

On Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Robert Stillwell interviewed an individual after receiving information that he was illegally holding a white-tailed deer as a pet. The individual did have a deer that stayed closed to his residence, however the deer was free to leave. Cpl. Stillwell advised the individual of laws regarding possession of wildlife.

### **LAKE SINCLAIR**

On the evening of April 30<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Stanford patrolled numerous areas of Lake Sinclair. Several warnings were issued for various boating violations. One subject was arrested for operating a vessel under the influence and transported to the Baldwin County Jail.

## **MUSCOGEE COUNTY**

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen and Sgt. Jim Bradfield attended a multi-jurisdiction Law Enforcement appreciation day at Calvary Christian School. K-9 Ruger was utilized to put on several demonstrations to display the various functions of the Department's K-9 program.

## **PUTNAM COUNTY**

On the afternoon of April 29<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Bubba Stanford responded to the Oconee National Forest to assist USFS LEO Zach Nichols with an illegal hunter. The hunter was hunting turkeys and was in possession of a 30-06 and an unplugged 12 gauge shotgun loaded with buckshot. The subject received citations for hunting with an unplugged shotgun and hunting with illegal ammo.

## **TALBOT COUNTY**

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Mitch Oliver received a complaint of hunting from a public road and hunting without permission from a lease holder on Carlisle Gap Rd in Talbot County. The complainant gave Cpl. Oliver the tag number of the suspect and a description of the truck. Cpl. Oliver made contact with the suspect and asked him to meet him back at the location. The suspect admitted to exiting his truck and shooting at a turkey from the public road as well as entering the property in question to hunt a second bird he heard gobbling. Cpl. Oliver issued the suspect a citation for hunting from a public road and a warning for hunting without permission.

## **Region V- Albany (Southwest)**

### **CALHOUN COUNTY**

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Jim Atchley received information that an individual had picked up a young fox and taken it to a local school where several teachers and students had possible contact with the fox. Sgt. Atchley contacted the individual and learned the individual had been bitten by the fox while handling it. He then met with the individual and took possession of the fox for rabies testing. He also obtained the names of all students and staff that had contact with the fox at the school, and learned that no one at the school was bitten or scratched by the fox. Sgt. Atchley then met with officials from the Health Department, releasing the fox to them and providing a brief of the incident along with the contact information of the person that was bitten and the names of everyone who had contact with the fox. The incident was reported to school administration and the Health Department will follow up with results from the testing as soon as it is completed.

### **CRISP COUNTY**

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Bob Holley and Sgt. Al Greer were patrolling Lake Blackshear when they stopped a vessel in reference to a citizen complaint. During the stop, the operator of the vessel was determined to be under the influence of alcohol. The vessel was also occupied by two eleven year old juveniles who were not wearing the required personal flotation devices. The operator was placed under arrest for operating a vessel under the influence, child endangerment and allowing an underage person on board a moving vessel without a personal flotation device. The operator was then transported to the Crisp County Jail where he was cited on the aforementioned charges and turned over to the Sheriff's Office for booking and bond.

### **THOMAS COUNTY**

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. David Ruddell and Ranger Eric White checked several areas that had been baited for turkeys and located subjects actively hunting two of the baited sites. Four subjects were charged for hunting big game over bait and one warning was issued for hunting with an unplugged shotgun.

### **DECATUR COUNTY**

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Scott Carroll and RFC Steve Thomas responded to a boat incident on the Flint River, north of Bainbridge. The incident occurred when the vessel's steering malfunctioned, causing the vessel to strike a tree on the riverbank and the ensuing wake swamped the vessel. None of the eight occupants were injured and the vessel only sustained minor damage.

## **Region VI- Metter (Southeast)**

### **CHARLTON COUNTY**

On April 30th, Ranger Judd Sears patrolled Stephen Foster State Park for fishing activity. Ranger Sears encountered a number of fisherman during his patrol of the area. While checking for license requirements and creel limits, Ranger Sears discovered one individual fishing without a license. The violation was documented for resident fishing without a license.

### **ECHOLS COUNTY**

On April 25<sup>th</sup>, Sergeant Patrick Dupree and Ranger Judd Sears completed an investigation related to a bear hide that was discovered discarded in a wooded area near Fruitland. After brief interviews, the officers learned that the bear was legally taken two years ago, but the freezer that the hide was stored in had recently stopped working. The bear hide spoiled and was discarded.

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, Sergeant Patrick Dupree encountered a boater at Statenville Landing on the Alapaha River. The vessel's registration had expired in 2014. Sgt. Dupree recognized the vessel as the same one he had observed several weeks prior being operated without valid registration. During this initial encounter, Sgt. Dupree gave the vessel owner verbal guidance on applying for the registration. Sgt. Dupree issued a written warning for operating a vessel with expired registration.

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, near midnight, Sgt. Patrick Dupree received a call from a citizen that he was observing a spot-light being shined from a pickup on Will Rewis Road. The caller advised the truck was proceeding slowly and the light was being shined in a searching manner. The caller believed they were hunting deer at night. Sgt. Dupree immediately responded to the area and encountered the truck a few miles north and parked crossways of the highway with the headlights shining into the right-of-way. Sgt. Dupree conducted a stop of the vehicle and discovered three individuals that had been locating and gigging frogs along the highway ditches. The individuals possessed two frog gigs, hip boots, and a sack of giggered bullfrogs. Sgt. Dupree advised them to be mindful of other vehicle traffic along the highway and to be safe.

### **SCREVEN COUNTY**

On April 18<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Shaymus McNeely responded to a fishing without permission complaint, at a private pond off Brannens Bridge Road. Cpl. McNeely apprehended three suspects at the scene. All three suspects were charged for fishing without permission.

### **BULLOCH COUNTY**

On April 17<sup>th</sup>, Ranger First Class Jordan Crawford was patrolling Oliver Bridge Wildlife Management Area when he encountered two subjects who had just made it back to their vehicle from an afternoon of turkey hunting. As RFC Crawford checked the men's hunting licenses he noticed the strong odor of marijuana coming from both men. Upon questioning the individuals one of the subjects admitted to having the drug on his person. As RFC Crawford was placing the suspect under arrest the other subject started to have a seizure. RFC Crawford called for EMS to respond to the scene. The individual was treated by EMS and the suspect was turned over to the Bulloch County Sheriff's office.

### **JENKINS COUNTY**

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Mike Wilcox conducted a vessel patrol on the Ogeechee River from the Bull Hole down to Roger's Landing and back. Cpl. Wilcox checked five boats and five fishing licenses. Cpl. Wilcox documented one violation for operating a vessel without Coast Guard approved life jackets.

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Mike Wilcox and Ranger Randall Meeks conducted a vessel patrol on the Ogeechee River. The officers worked from Horseshoe Bend up the river to Bennett's Landing and back. The officers checked 30 boats. The officers documented several violations as follows: fishing without a license, fishing without a license on person, operating a vessel without CGA PFD's, and operating a vessel with insufficient PFDs.

### **DODGE COUNTY**

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, Corporal John A Stokes patrolled Dodge Public Fishing Area for fishing and boating safety violations. Three violations were documented for fishing on a Public Fishing Area without a Wildlife Management License.

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, RFC Allen Mills and Sgt. James McLaughlin patrolled the Ocmulgee River near Abbeville. Numerous vessels and fishermen were checked for fishing and boating compliance. Verbal guidance was given for minor violations, including not having personal flotation devices readily accessible.

### **LAURENS COUNTY**

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Dan Stiles and Ranger First Class Allen Mills patrolled the Beaverdam Wildlife Management Area. Six individuals were checked for hunting, fishing, and GA Outdoor Recreation Pass (GORP) licenses. Two violations for entering designated fee area without a GORP were documented at the Beaverdam shooting range and one violation for possession / transportation of a loaded firearm in a vehicle on a Wildlife Management Area was documented.

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Dan Stiles and Ranger First Class Allen Mills conducted a vessel patrol on the Oconee River. Two vessels were checked for boating safety compliance and one fishing license was checked. No violations were detected.

## **Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)**

### **GLYNN/ CAMDEN**

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, RFC David Brady, RFC John Evans and Cpl. Kate Hargrove conducted a concentrated patrol offshore Jekyll Island and Cumberland Island for shrimp trawler activity. One commercial trawler was boarded to check compliance on the fishing gear aboard the vessel.

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, SGT Chris Ridley, CPL Kate Hargrove, RFC Colte Shaske and Biologist Mark Dodd patrolled offshore St. Simons Island, Jekyll Island, and Cumberland Island for offshore shrimp trawler activity. Rangers boarded 5 shrimp boats checking Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) for violations as part of the Joint Enforcement Agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association.







### **CAMDEN COUNTY**

On April 28<sup>th</sup>, RFC Colte Shaske received a call from Camden County Sheriff's Office stating that someone witnessed multiple suspects trying to catch an alligator at a golf course pond. RFC Shaske responded with Deputies and found 6 suspects who stated that they were not trying to catch the alligator only trying to fish and look at him. RFC Shaske contacted professional Trapper Jackie Carter to relocate the alligator. RFC Shaske and Trapper Jackie Carter captured the Alligator and relocated it. The alligator measured exactly 10 feet long.



On April 29<sup>th</sup>, RFC David Brady conducted several Information and Education programs at Crooked River Elementary School in St. Mary's. RFC Brady presented the programs on Boating Safety and Career opportunity with DNR Law Enforcement Division.

