

Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report
January 10 – January 16, 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 January 10th, Cpl. Byron Young located a hunter off Tom Jones Rd hunting deer without permission on private property. The hunter was not wearing the required hunter orange. The hunter was issued a citation and warning for the violations.

On January 16th, Sgt. Derek Dillard and RFC Bart Hendrix were patrolling western Bartow County for waterfowl activity. The officers located three hunters roost shooting ducks after hours. The hunters had some minor license violations as well. Citations were issued for hunting waterfowl after legal hours.

GORDON COUNTY

During the investigation of the killing of antlerless deer in Dade County on January 10th, Cpl. Shawn Elmore received information about an antlerless deer that had been killed by a Ranger resident on Saturday January 9th. Cpl. Elmore located the man and he admitted to killing the antlerless deer. He was charged with taking of antlerless deer.

CHATTOOGA COUNTY

On December 22nd, the Chattooga County Sheriff's Office responded to a domestic situation off Gilreath Mill Road. One of the assisting officers had retired from DNR Game Management and noticed three buck deer heads in the bed of the suspect's truck in plain view. He passed on the information and a picture of the deer heads to DNR Law Enforcement Division RFC Roger McConkey and Cpl. Tommy Gentry. RFC McConkey and Cpl. Gentry began an investigation. The officers discovered that the suspect had hunting licenses several years ago, but did not currently possess a hunting license, big game license, or deer harvest record. On January 7th, RFC McConkey contacted Sgt. Mike Barr and asked him to interview the subject which was being held in the Bartow County Jail for Chattooga County. Sgt. Barr advised the subject of his Miranda rights and he agreed to speak with Sgt. Barr. At first he stated the three bucks were given to him by his cousin. Sgt. Barr advised the subject to tell the truth, especially on information that could be verified. The subject admitted to killing the three bucks on land near his house off Gilreath Mill Road on three occasions from October through December 2015. DNR LED is in the process of confirming those statements.

DADE COUNTY

On Friday January 8th, Cpl. Shawn Elmore and RFC Ben Cunningham were working in a known night hunting area of Dade County. At approximately midnight, a truck came through the area and used a spotlight to shine the field. A shot was fired from the truck. Cpl. Elmore and RFC Cunningham stopped the vehicle which was occupied by three Trenton residents. Two firearms were located in the vehicle as well as a spotlight that was straight wired to the battery. All three subjects were charged with hunting deer at night, hunting from a public road, and hunting from a motor vehicle. Cpl. Tommy Gentry was also in the area and attempted to locate the deer the subjects shot but was unable to find the deer. The shooter stated he thought he had missed the deer.

In the early morning hours on Saturday January 9th, Cpl. Tommy Gentry and Cpl. Shawn Elmore worked at Cloudland Canyon State Park for the Cloudland Canyon 11M/50M Run. Runners from all over the United States participated in this cross country run. The Rangers made sure the runners were able to cross Hwy 189 safely by providing blue lights and traffic control before daylight.

On January 10th, around 2 AM, Cpl. Tommy Gentry received a call from Dade County E911. A Dade County Sheriff's Deputy had located a truck parked at the gas pump at the Citgo on Deer Head Cove Rd in Rising Fawn. In the bed of the truck was a doe deer. Antlerless deer days had gone out in Dade County on January 1st. Cpl. Gentry went to the area and waited. Around 5 AM, Cpl. Shawn Elmore went to the Wildwood residence of the owner of the truck and spoke with a female at that location who said the owner had gone deer hunting with his friend in Johnson's Crook. Cpl. Elmore also got information of where the suspect was staying over the weekend. Cpl. Gentry and Cpl. Elmore located the Wildwood man late in the morning. He admitted to killing the doe deer in Johnson's Crook on Saturday afternoon January 9th. Upon further questioning it was found the man's hunting companion, a Chattanooga, TN resident had also killed a doe on Saturday afternoon. Cpl. Elmore made contact with wildlife officers from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency for assistance in locating the Chattanooga man. Wildlife Officers Joe McSpaden, Russ Vandergriff, and Jared Coxe located the Chattanooga man near his daughter's residence loading up a camper. It appeared he was getting ready to leave town for a few weeks. Due to the potential violation of the Lacey Act, Cpl. Elmore met with the Chattanooga man and the TWRA officers in Chattanooga. He admitted to shooting the doe deer and giving it to a family in Chattanooga. He also said he was unaware it was buck only in Georgia. Both individuals were charged with taking of antlerless deer.

Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)

BARROW COUNTY

On January 12, Ranger Chris Kernahan conducted an investigation in Barrow County involving a convicted felon who was illegally in possession of multiple firearms. The subject was also found to be in violation of the Georgia Controlled Substance Act, had taken deer illegally with firearms, and violated the recording and reporting requirements for deer. The subject was subsequently arrested, and deer antlers seized. Ranger Kernahan obtained warrants for the violations. At the completion of the investigation, an additional subject was found to have hunted without a license, hunted without a big game license, taken deer illegally, and violated the recording and reporting requirements for deer. The subject was issued citations for the violations.

On January 13, Ranger Chris Kernahan completed the Interviews and Interrogations Course. He also recently completed the Photography and Digital Imaging Course. The various trainings were held at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center.

Region III- Thomson (East Central)

OGLETHORPE COUNTY

On Saturday, January 16, Sgt. Brian Carter, Cpl. Mark Patterson, and RFC Phillip Nelson were working duck hunting activity when Sgt. Carter heard shots fired after legal hours for hunting ducks. Cpl. Patterson and RFC Nelson responded to his location and they located six subjects hunting waterfowl after hours. Violations documented were hunting waterfowl after legal hours, hunting waterfowl with lead shot, and hunting waterfowl without a federal duck stamp.

WILKES COUNTY

On January 16, Cpl. Mark Patterson conducted a patrol of the Clarks Hill WMA in response to recent damage caused by ATV riders. Contact was made with a group of riders who had driven around a closed gate on the WMA. Violations documented were for the offense of illegal use of an ATV on a WMA. Later in the day, Cpl. Patterson responded to a complaint of hunting deer out of season. No hunting activity was detected during this investigation but a subject was located on the property burning household debris from an abandoned home. The violation of burning egregious litter was documented. The subject was also found to be wanted on a probation warrant. Upon verifying of the warrant the individual was taken into custody by Deputies from the Wilkes County Sheriff's Office.

GREENE COUNTY

Cpl. Derrell Worth cited one subject for hunting waterfowl without permission and one subject for hunting waterfowl without a state waterfowl license.

HANCOCK COUNTY

On January 12, an anonymous tip was given in reference to possible illegal trapping taking place within a registered high fence located in Hancock County. This 12 mile fenced in area was to contain approximately 2100 acres. During the week, Cpl. Derrell Worth gathered intelligence on the above site along with the necessary equipment to deploy on the property in order to monitor the activity 24 hours a day. On January 16, Cpl. Derrell Worth proceeded to the above location and while on foot patrol, he started locating unmarked snares along the high fence. The snares were being used to catch wildlife as they entered the property (under the high fence). While working the property, the trapper was also located on site and was observed working the snares. At this time, Cpl. Derrell Worth contacted Cpl. David Allen to set up down from the entrance of the said property and wait on the suspect to exit the property. Due to not being able to keep up with the trapper, Cpl. Derrell Worth proceeded back to his patrol vehicle to set up at the other entrance until the trapper exited the location. After approximately one hour, Cpl. Allen performed a traffic stop on the suspect as he exited the above property. Cpl. Worth proceeded to the stop location and identified the two trappers he observed earlier working the snares. After an interview was conducted, Cpl. Worth and Cpl. Allen proceeded back to the incident location with the commercial trapper and removed 29 unmarked snares. A total of 87 violations were observed and charges are pending. The snares were taken as evidence.

NEWTON COUNTY

On January 11, Ranger Dan Schay finished up hunting without permission investigation. Charges for hunting without permission, hunting without a license, hunting without a big game license, and making false statements were made.

On January 17, Ranger Schay was checking duck hunters and a violation for operating a vessel without PFDs were documented.

LAKE OCONEE

RFC Ricky Boles and Ranger Jason Harrison patrolled around Lake Oconee checking duck hunters. The Rangers cited one individual for not having a state waterfowl license.

Region IV- Macon (West Central)

HARRIS COUNTY

On January 10th, Cpl. Mitch Oliver was patrolling for hunting activity and checked a hunter exiting the woods at dusk. The hunter's license were checked and everything was in order. The hunter said that he had to go and pick up a friend at another gate that he believed had harvested a deer. Cpl. Oliver followed the subject around to the other gate and checked the second hunter when he exited the woods. The hunter wasn't wearing a fluorescent orange vest and was also hunting with an expired hunting license. He was issued a citation for hunting without a license and was given a written warning for hunting deer without wearing fluorescent orange.

MERIWETHER COUNTY

On Tuesday, January 12th, Cpl. Keith Waddell patrolled Joe Kurz WMA and issued a written warning for failure to sign in on WMA.

On Thursday, January 14th, Cpl. Travis Sweat patrolled Joe Kurz WMA and issued two written warnings for failure to sign federal duck stamp.

On Saturday, January 16th, RFC Kevin Godbee, Sgt. Brent Railey and college Intern Kalyn Turner patrolled Joe Kurz WMA and checked several boats and duck hunters. They issued two written warnings for license and boating violations.

TALBOT COUNTY

On January 10th, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen was patrolling private property for deer hunting activity. Cpl. Bolen located a vehicle on the property and noticed that the truck owner was missing a hunting license according to the hunting license database. The individual's big game license was also expired. K-9 Ruger was utilized to locate the hunter in the woods. The hunter was issued a citation for hunting without a license and a written warning for hunting without a big game license.

TAYLOR COUNTY

On January 16th, Cpl. Josh Swain was working duck hunting activity. Cpl. Swain heard a shoot nearby that started well before daylight. Cpl. Swain was able to locate and check the hunters. Three of the hunters had license violations which were addressed and the hunters were also warned for shooting before legal shooting hours.

TROUP COUNTY

On Saturday, January 16th, RFC Russell Epps patrolled West Point WMA. He issued two written warnings for failure to check in on WMA.

Region V- Albany (Southwest)

WORTH COUNTY

On the afternoon of January 10, Cpl. Greg Wade was patrolling the county when he heard several shots coming from an area where he had previously charged several hunters with hunting doves over bait. Upon arriving at the field, it was determined that the hunters were once again in violation. All nine hunters were charged with hunting doves over bait.

GRADY COUNTY

On January 13, Ranger Eric White checked a group of sixteen subjects hunting dove in a peanut field. Ranger White surveyed the area and determined that the field was baited with split peanuts. The subjects were charged with hunting over bait, along with various licenses violations. Thirty-five dove were confiscated and donated to a less-fortunate family in the community.

DOUGHERTY COUNTY

On January 14, Cpl. Greg Wade and Ranger Eric White were checking a dove shoot in Dougherty County when Cpl. Wade observed a hunter acting strangely. The hunter was unaware that Cpl. Wade was watching him, and he began stashing bird's under a hay bale in an attempt to hide them. After making contact with the hunter, it was determined that he had taken over the daily bag limit of birds and was charged accordingly.

Region VI- Metter (Southeast)

WARE COUNTY

On the morning of January 16th, Corporal Jason Shipes encountered several duck hunters along the Satilla River near Waycross. Citations were issued for operating a vessel without any personal flotation devices and hunting ducks without a Georgia waterfowl license.

Later on January 16th, Corporal Jason Shipes and Ranger First Class Sam Williams were conducting a patrol of the Satilla River by vessel near Hwy. 84 boat landing when they observed a male subject fishing. Recognizing the officers as being law enforcement, the subject suddenly began to walk toward the parking area, leaving his fishing gear behind. When the officers pulled up near the subject further down the bank, he began to run. The officers gave pursuit and apprehended the subject a short distance later. During an interview, it was discovered that the subject ran because he did not have a fishing license.

WHEELER COUNTY

On January 16th, Sergeant James McLaughlin, Corporal Kevin Joyce, K9 Briar, and Ranger First Class Rodney Horne located and apprehended a deer dog hunting group. Four poachers were apprehended and charged with hunting deer out of season, hunting deer with dogs in a closed county, and two counts of fleeing and attempting to elude an officer.

LOWNDES COUNTY

On January 15th, Ranger First Class Keith McDonald was traveling on North Valdosta Road when an individual changed lanes without warning. RFC McDonald maneuvered his patrol truck onto the shoulder to avoid being hit by the individual. RFC McDonald made a traffic stop and soon discovered the truck was stolen. Lowndes County Sheriff's Office was contacted to assist RFC McDonald. The subject had warrants out of Florida, Virginia and Kentucky. The subject was taken to Lowndes County Jail and charged with bringing stolen property into Georgia, driving with a suspended license, and failure to maintain lane.

BERRIEN COUNTY

On January 15th, at approximately 9:00P.M., Cpl. Tommy Daughtrey observed a spotlight being shined out of the window of a truck on a dirt road. Cpl. Daughtrey followed the truck as a light was shined out of the passenger side window of the truck into a pecan orchard. A traffic stop was made on the suspect vehicle. It was determined that the two hunters in the vehicle were raccoon hunting. Violations of hunting from a vehicle and hunting from the road were documented.

APPLING COUNTY

On January 11th – 15th, Corporal Chase Altman attended ALERRT Training's Train the Trainer in Milledgeville. It was a week-long event focusing on responding to an active shooter in a building scenario.

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY

On January 10th, Corporal Chase Altman responded to a call of a truck that had gotten stuck in a hole on Bullard Creek WMA. The man was trying to cross a wash out and his truck sank and was washed to the side of the road due to all the flooding. Local deputies and GSP were also dispatched, along with a wrecker. The man was found and taken to safety, and his truck was pulled from the water.

Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)

BRANTLEY COUNTY

On January 10th, RFC John Evans responded to a deer dogging complaint on Little Satilla WMA. Upon arrival he found eight hunters on the WMA running deer dogs. Evans began collecting licenses and recognized one of the hunters as a convicted felon he had previously dealt with. Upon investigating further, Evans was able to locate the gun the man had hidden in the woods. He was arrested and charged with possession of firearm by a convicted felon and hunting deer with dogs on unpermitted property. The other seven men were charged with hunting deer with dogs on unpermitted property and hunting without a license.

GLYNN COUNTY

On January 15th, RFC John Evans, RFC Colte Shaske, and CPL Chris Ridley were working an illegal artifact digging complaint on St Simons Island. The suspect was found coming out of the property at approximately 11:30pm. When the Rangers attempted to make contact, a foot pursuit ensued. Shaske caught up to the fleeing suspect and the suspect then began to fight. Shaske and Evans gained control of the suspect and placed him in handcuffs. The man was arrested and charged with criminal trespass, obstruction and collecting artifact without permission. This investigation has been ongoing for some time and has resulted in the seizure of 172 artifacts to date.