

Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report
July 3 – July 9, 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 July 3rd, Sgt. Derek Dillard, Cpl. Brooks Varnell, RFC Bart Hendrix and RFC Zack Hardy responded to a call of a sinking boat immediately following the fireworks show near Stamp Creek on Allatoona Lake. The officers located 3 people that were in a 20 foot Moomba Ski boat that was overtaken by waves and sunk to the bottom. The passengers of the boat were thrown PFD's by a passing houseboat. RFC Hardy interviewed the operator of the vessel and determined that he was under the influence of alcohol. The operator was placed under arrest for BUI.

On July 3rd, Cpl. Byron Young and Bartow County Deputy Jonathan Shirley stopped a vessel for improper lights near Bethany Bridge on Allatoona Lake. The operator was found to be under the influence of alcohol. The operator was placed under arrest for BUI.

On July 7th, Sgt. Derek Dillard and Cpl. Byron Young were patrolling Red Top Mt. State Park in the late evening. The officers encountered a male in the parking lot area near the boat ramp. The officers immediately located a smoking pipe and a small amount of marijuana in the subject's shirt pocket. The male was charged with possession of marijuana less than one ounce.

CHEROKEE COUNTY

On July 9th, Cpl. Brooks Varnell and RFC Hendrix responded to a boat incident with injuries. By the time Rangers arrived on scene a male passenger had been air lifted to Atlanta Medical Center. The female operator of the vessel said that a large wake from a passing vessel pushed their boat close the bank near the S-Curves. She fell back from the steering wheel and the boat went vertical up onto the bank. The male passenger was ejected. The female operator showed no signs of impairment. The incident is still under investigation.

FULTON COUNTY

On July 4th, Cpl. Chad Cox and RFC Daniel Gray patrolled on the Chattahoochee River from Jones Bridge to McGinnis Ferry. During the patrol Rangers conducted 20 fishing license checks and 300 vessel checks. 3 subjects were cited for the following violations: fishing w/o license, fishing w/o trout license and operating vessel w/o PFD's.

CARROLL COUNTY

July 9th, Cpl. Chad Cox and RFC Daniel Gray conducted boating safety and fishing license checks on Lake Seaton and Lake Carroll. During the patrol Rangers cited 3 individuals for: operating vessel after darkness w/o lights and operating vessel w/o PFD's.

HARALSON COUNTY

July 9th, Cpl. Chad Cox and RFC Daniel Gray patrolled on the Tallapoosa River. During the patrol Rangers cited two individuals for operating vessel w/o PFD's.

Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)

TOWNS COUNTY

On July 2, RFC David Webb and SGT Steve Seitz patrolled Lake Chatuge for boating violations. During their patrol, the officers issued citations and warnings for Towing skier without wearing PFD, operating a PWC over idle speed within 100 feet of a fixed object, jumping wake within 100 feet of another vessel and operating a vessel with an unserviceable fire extinguisher.

On July 3, RFC David Webb and SGT Greg Colson patrolled Lake Chatuge for boating violations. During their patrol, the officers issued a citation and warning for nonresident fishing without a license and operating a vessel without a CGA PFD. The officers also give verbal guidance to multiple boat operators for operating a vessel with improper lights during the fireworks.

RABUN COUNTY

On July 3rd, Ranger Beth Gilbert issued 3 citations to 3 adult men for accessing the Tallulah Gorge without permits and 1 warning was issued to 1 adult male for fishing without a license.

On July 4th, Ranger Gilbert issued citations to five adult males for entering the Tallulah Gorge without permits and for possessing a bb gun on park property. On the same day, Ranger Gilbert assisted with the rescue of a snake bite victim in the bottom of the gorge.

On July 7th, Ranger Gilbert was invited to the Rabun County Library to put on a water safety program for children. Eight people were in attendance.

Region III- Thomson (East Central)

No activity to report.

Region IV- Macon (West Central)

CEDAR CREEK WMA

On the afternoon of July 7th, Cpl. Bubba Stanford patrolled the WMA and located a dump site. A person or persons dumped a large pile of roofing shingles on a WMA road. The incident is still under investigation.

COWETA COUNTY

On Saturday, July 2nd, Cpl. Travis Sweat patrolled Chattahoochee Bend State Park. He issued several warnings for fishing without a license and PFD violations.

HARRIS COUNTY

On June 25th, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen and Sgt. Jim Bradfield were patrolling Lake Harding for boating violations. After conducting a vessel stop, Cpl. Bolen discovered that the operator had consumed alcohol. During the field sobriety exercises, Cpl. Bolen became aware that the operator smokes marijuana occasionally. The operator was not arrested for boating under the influence and he gave consent for officers to search his vessel. Cpl. Bolen located a flashlight during the search, which would not turn on. Cpl. Bolen examined inside the flashlight and discovered a plastic bag containing suspected marijuana, as well as a smoking device. The operator was issued a citation for possession of marijuana less than an ounce.

LAKE SINCLAIR

On the evening of June 23rd, Cpl. Bubba Stanford and RFC Jeremy Reese were contacted in reference to a boating incident near Twin Bridges on Lake Sinclair. A boat exploded with 2 occupants on board shortly after fueling up. The victims jumped overboard and swam to the shoreline where they were transported to the hospital in reference to burns. The incident is still under investigation.

The following evening, RFC Reese and Cpl. Stanford patrolled the Oconee River area of the lake. Several vessels were stopped and verbal guidance was given. The officers did charge one subject for unlawful burning that they saw from the water. The subject was burning treated lumber that was torn down due to rebuilding a porch.

On the afternoon of June 25th, RFC Ronnie Beard and Cpl. Stanford conducted a ride along for the Baldwin Bulletin. The officers covered boating enforcement issues as well as boating safety laws. Afterwards, the officers patrolled the lake and issued several warnings for boating violations and towed one stranded vessel to safety. Later that evening, RFC Jeremy Reese and Cpl. Robert Stilwell patrolled Lake Sinclair as well and arrested one subject for boating under the influence and he was transported to the Putnam County Jail.

On the afternoons of July 1st and July 2nd, numerous officers patrolled Lake Sinclair. A large number of boats were stopped and citations were issued for insufficient PFD's as well as violation of the 100 foot rule. One boating incident was worked when 2 PWC's collided. Both operators, who were juveniles, were treated and released at the Oconee Regional Medical Center in Milledgeville.

On the evening of July 3rd, RFC Micheal Crawley, RFC Jeremy Reese, Cpl. Bubba Stanford and Sgt. Bo Kelly patrolled Lake Sinclair. Numerous boats were stopped and citations were issued. Two subjects were arrested for boating under the influence to include one subject on a PWC operating during the fireworks display at 10:00 p.m.

On the afternoon of July 4th, RFC Ronnie Beard and Sgt. Bo Kelly patrolled Lake Sinclair. One subject was arrested for boating under the influence and was transported to the Baldwin County Jail.

MERIWETHER COUNTY

On Saturday, July 2nd, Cpl. Travis Sweat patrolled Pigeon Creek WMA. He issued several citations and warnings for PFD violations.

MUSCOGEE COUNTY

On July 4th, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen and Cpl. Mitch Oliver checked boating activity during the annual fireworks show along the Chattahoochee River in Columbus. The officers issued 3 citations for operating a vessel without lights during hours of darkness, 3 citations for allowing underage child to ride in a moving vessel without wearing a PFD, 2 written warnings for operating a vessel without lights during hours of darkness, and 1 written warning for operating a vessel with insufficient PFD's.

TROUP COUNTY

On the afternoon of Saturday, July 2nd, RFC Russell Epps was driving by several parked cars near Yellow Jacket Access. He saw one man getting what appeared to be a spear gun out of a vehicle. He returned to the area a short time later by vessel with RFC Kevin Godbee and Intern Chris Thompson. They located two men in the water spearfishing and when checked the two men had four spotted bass and one catfish on a stringer. All the fish had signs of having been shot with the spear guns. The men were arrested and transported to the Troup County Jail. The spear guns were confiscated as evidence and the fish confiscated and donated to a local shelter.



On Saturday, July 2nd, Cpl. Keith Waddell, RFC Russell Epps and Sgt. Brent Railey were patrolling West Point Lake at about 9:30 PM when they located a vessel operating without lights. After stopping the vessel, doing an inspection and the operator being given field sobriety tests, they arrested the operator for BUI, child endangerment BUI and operating a vessel without lights. The operator was transported to the Troup County jail.

On Sunday, July 3rd, RFC Russell Epps, Cpl. Travis Sweat, Cpl. Keith Waddell, Sgt. Brent Railey and Major Thomas Barnard patrolled West Point Lake. For part of the day they were assisted by DNR Aviation unit in search of boating violations. The rangers issues approximately 25 cases and warnings including multiple 100 foot violations on personal watercraft and one BUI/operating PWC after hours.

On Monday, July 4th, RFC Russell Epps, Cpl. Travis Sweat, Cpl. Keith Waddell and Sgt. Brent Railey patrolled West Point Lake. They issued approximately 10 cases and warnings for various violations.

Region V- Albany (Southwest)

DECATUR COUNTY

On July 4th, Cpl. Tony Cox, RFC Steve Thomas, and RFC Quinn Fogle responded to a complaint of intoxicated subjects fighting on a sandbar on the Flint River below Bainbridge. Two suspects, a husband and wife, were arrested and charged with Public Drunkenness.

On July 8th, RFC Steve Thomas responded to a boat incident on the Spring Creek portion of Lake Seminole. The incident occurred when an airboat was swamped and sank in shallow water. This incident was caused by operator inexperience. No injuries were incurred during this incident.

On July 9th, RFC Steve Thomas was on patrol at the Boat Basin in Bainbridge when he observed a vessel enter the No Wake Zone at an excessive speed. RFC Thomas made contact with the operator and determined that he was operating under the influence. The subject was arrested for BUI and transported to jail.

Region VI- Metter (Southeast)

CHARLTON COUNTY

On July 3rd, Sergeant Patrick Dupree, Ranger First Class Sam Williams, and Ranger Judd Sears patrolled Trader's Hill Landing on the St. Mary's River for boating activity. The officers observed a vessel approach the landing at a high rate of speed. The vessel continued past the swimming area, passing within a few feet of the fishing pier. The operator was charged with operating a vessel above idle speed within 100' of a boat ramp and public swimming area.

On July 4th, Sergeant Patrick Dupree, Corporal Jason Shipes, Ranger Judd Sears, and Ranger First Class Sam Williams responded to a boating incident on the St. Mary's River near Camp Pinkney Boat Landing. There were six occupants onboard at the time of the incident. It appeared the operator lost control of the vessel while operating at high speed and went into the trees along the bank before finally running aground. Two passengers and the operator were transported to area hospitals for treatment of injuries.



Vessel on St. Mary's River after running aground.

WARE COUNTY

On July 4th, Sgt. Patrick Dupree, Corporal Jason Shipes, Ranger First Class Sam Williams, and Ranger Judd Sears conducted a patrol of the Dixon Wildlife Management Area shooting range. Four individuals were cited for littering and one individual was issued a written warning for violation of range rules.

COFFEE COUNTY

On July 3rd, Corporal Tim Hutto and Ranger First Class Keith McDonald concluded a complaint based investigation on a subject in Douglas for hunting alligators out of season. The complaint came to Corporal Hutto from a concerned citizen in Coffee County after a subject posted on Facebook that he was in the act of trying kill an alligator. The officers located the subject on the evening of July 3rd and after interviewing him, one violation was documented for hunting alligators out of season.

On July 1st, Corporal Tim Hutto and Corporal Tommy Daughtrey patrolled the Ocmulgee River in Coffee County. At around 5:30 p.m., the officers stopped a suspicious vessel just east of Barr's Bluff Landing. While talking with the two occupants of the vessel, the officers noticed there were no fishing rods on board, just dip nets, extra batteries, and suspicious looking wiring. The officers asked the operator if they were in possession of a device used to shock fish and the operator produced a homemade fish shocking device. Both occupants admitted to having the device in use in the water as the officers approached their vessel. Both occupants were charged with shocking fish. The device was seized as evidence.



JEFF DAVIS COUNTY

On July 3rd, Corporal Tim Hutto and Ranger First Class Keith McDonald patrolled the Ocmulgee River from Barr's Bluff Landing in Coffee to Rocky Hammock Landing in Jeff Davis County. The officers stopped by a landing on Flat Tub WMA to check fishing activity. At the landing, the officers saw a vehicle pull up with five male subjects in the bed of the vehicle. As the officers approached the vehicle they began to smell a strong odor of burnt marijuana. While talking with the subjects, one of them produced a small marijuana cigarette. Another larger marijuana cigarette was later located in the bed of the pickup. Violations were documented on all five subjects for misdemeanor possession of marijuana.

LAURENS COUNTY

On July 3rd, Corporal Dan Stiles and Ranger First Class Allen Mills patrolled the Hugh M. Gillis Public Fishing Area. The officers checked six vessels for registration and boating safety equipment. The officers also checked thirteen anglers for license and creel compliance. Warnings were given to several persons for entering a fee area without a Georgia Outdoor Recreation Pass.

On July 9th, Corporal Dan Stiles conducted a night patrol at the Beaverdam Wildlife Management Area. No violations were detected.

DODGE COUNTY

On July 5th, Ranger First Class Allen Mills was working a complaint in reference to a deer control permit. RFC Mills observed a vehicle stop in the road way and heard one shot come from that vehicle. After a brief interview, two citations were issued for violation of a deer kill permit (locate/shooting from a public road).

TELFAIR COUNTY

On July 3rd, Sergeant James McLaughlin, Corporal John Stokes, and Ranger First Class Rodney Horne conducted a vessel patrol on the Ocmulgee River. Fifteen violations for fishing and boating safety violations were documented including one arrest for boating under the influence.

Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)

CAMDEN COUNTY

On July 3rd, RFC John Evans and CPL Kate Hargrove were patrolling the area of Temple Landing boat ramp on the St Mary's River. While checking a boat at the dock, RFC Evans noticed another boat come in to the ramp. The operator pulled up to the bank and then gunned it and drive the boat up on the rocks. RFC Evans walked over to the man and noticed a strong odor of alcohol coming from the operator. Evans walked the man up to his truck and conducted a BUI screening. The operator was determined to be under the influence of alcohol and drugs. He was arrested and charged with Operating a vessel under the influence.

Later that same evening, RFC Evans and CPL Hargrove were checking boats coming in to the Meeting Street boat ramp in St Mary's. The rangers checked a boat with five people on board that had four illegal fish. The suspects were in possession of two sandbar sharks, which is a prohibited species and several redfish that were over the slot limit. Three of the men were charged with Taking a prohibited species and Taking illegal size fish. The fish were turned over to biologists with the Coastal Resources Division for research.

On July 4th, RFC John Evans and RFC Colte Shaske were patrolling the St Mary's River and North River area after the fireworks show in St. Mary's. The rangers observed a boat coming toward the dock without bow lights. After a brief investigation, Evans conducted a BUI screening on the operator and he was subsequently arrested and charged with Operating a vessel under the influence of alcohol.