

Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report
March 20 – March 26, 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 March 23rd, Sgt. Derek Dillard and Cpl. Byron Young responded to a call of a missing / lost hiker on Pine Log WMA. Cpl. Young was able to talk to the missing male on his cell phone and narrow down the search area. After several hours the man was located around 10:00 p.m. and taken to his vehicle.

On March 26th, RFC's Micheal Crawley and Zack Hardy checked 2 hunters hunting turkey with unplugged shotguns. Warnings were issued for the violations.

On March 26th, Sgt. Derek Dillard and Cpl. Brooks Varnell patrolled Pine Log WMA. The officers checked several hunters and fishermen on the area. Citations and warnings were issued for Hunting without Turkey Harvest Record, Operating a Vessel without PFD's and Driving in Unimproved Area on WMA.

CHEROKEE COUNTY

On March 26th, RFC Bart Hendrix checked a hunter near Ballground hunting turkeys over bait. The hunter was sitting 12 yards from a large amount of cracked corn. The hunter was charged with hunting big game over bait.

WALKER COUNTY

On Saturday March 26th, RFC Roger McConkey located one subject hunting turkeys over bait. The subject was charged with hunting big game over bait.

On Saturday March 26th, Cpl. Tommy Gentry received a call about a caver that was trapped in the "Fantastic Pit" of Ellison's Cave on Pigeon Mountain WMA. After 8 hours, cave rescue units from DNR, Walker County Fire & Rescue, and Chattanooga/Hamilton County were able to get the caver safely out of Ellison's Cave. He will make a full recovery.

GORDON COUNTY

On March 24th, Cpl. Shawn Elmore was assisting Gordon County with a domestic violence call on Cochran Rd in Fairmount when a motorcyclist drove by the residence without wearing a helmet. Cpl. Elmore and Gordon County Deputy Salazar stopped the motorcycle on Cochran Rd and the driver was arrested for driving on a suspended license and an outstanding warrant.

On March 24th, Cpl. Shawn Elmore stopped to assist a motorist on Highway 53 between Fairmount and the Sonoraville community. The motorist had a water hose rupture. Cpl. Elmore allowed the motorist to call from help. Cpl. Elmore checked the tag on the vehicle and was able to find out the motorist had an outstanding warrant through Gordon County. He was taken into custody and turned over to the Gordon County Sheriff's Office.

Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)

HABERSHAM COUNTY

On March 26, while patrolling Habersham County on opening day of turkey season, RFC Chad Chambers and Ranger Beth Gilbert responded to two separate complaints of hunting without permission, hunting from a roadway, and hunting from a vehicle. Both investigations led to evidence that substantiated the complaints and the suspects confessed their illegal acts. One suspect was charged with hunting from a roadway and hunting from a vehicle, warned for without permission; other suspect charged with hunting without permission and warned for hunting from a vehicle and roadway due to circumstances of the case. The officers confiscated two adult gobblers as evidence. The meat from one turkey was salvaged and will be donated to a needy family. The meat from the other turkey was not salvageable.



Region III- Thomson (East Central)

RICHMOND COUNTY

On March 26, Cpl. Payne patrolled Richmond County checking areas baited for turkeys on private lands. A total of eight hunters were checked during the patrols. Of the eight hunters checked 6 were found to be hunting turkeys over bait. Other violations documented were license violations. None of the hunters checked possessed the appropriate harvest record for turkeys. Cpl. Payne printed off the turkey harvest record for each hunter encountered. Later in the morning Cpl. Payne met with two landowners and discussed without permission issues.

BURKE COUNTY

On Friday March 25, a landowner called Ranger First Class Jeff Billips and said man was fishing in his pond without permission. RFC Billips responded to the property and arrested the suspect. The suspect had been caught multiple times on the landowner's trail camera over the past year.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

On the morning of Saturday March 26, RFC Matherly checked two hunters off of Hannah Branch road in Jefferson County as they were returning to their vehicle after a morning of hunting Turkeys. While checking their license RFC Matherly found that one individual did not have a regular hunting license and neither of the men had the new spring turkey tags. RFC Matherly explained to them the new procedures and advised them to get the new turkey tags before the hunted again so that they could tag their turkeys properly. A citation was issued to the individual who did not possess a hunting license.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

On Sunday March 27, RFC Matherly Checked to hunters in Washington County on Tarver Grove road. They had all of the appropriate licenses.

On March 26, Cpl. Adams Patrolled Washington County checking baited areas for turkeys. A total of six hunters were checked. Of the six hunters 3 were found to be hunting turkeys over bait. One hunters was found to be hunting without a hunting license and big game license.

JOHNSON COUNTY

On March 26, Cpl. Adams responded to a request from the Johnson County Sheriff Office. The Sheriff Office needed help locating a possible suicidal female that had left her residence and went into the woods. Shortly after arriving the female was safely found with in a half mile of her residence.

OGLETHORPE COUNTY

On March 26, RFC Tim Butler located one turkey hunter who was hunting over bait, and another who was hunting without a plug. Both violations were documented.

ELBERT COUNTY

On March 26, CPL. Julian Wilkins located one subject hunting turkeys over bait in Elbert County.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

On March 26th, Cpl. Brian Hobbins and Ranger Michael Madden responded to Wildwood Boat Landing. The response was due to a two vessel collision in Keg Creek on Clarks Hill Lake. Two vessels collided while entering and exiting the boat ramp area. No injuries were reported only property damage. A report was generated and both Rangers went back in service.

Region IV- Macon (West Central)

BALDWIN COUNTY

On the morning of March 26th, Corporal Bubba Stanford checked several properties for turkey hunters. Two hunters were located hunting over a baited area and warnings and citations were issued. One additional hunter was issued a warning for hunting with an unplugged shotgun.

HEARD COUNTY

On Tuesday, March 14th, Sgt. Brent Railey responded to a call in Heard County about 4 men in the woods with a rifle. Sgt. Railey discovered that 4 men and some coon hunters had gotten into an altercation about the dogs being on an adjoining property.

HENRY COUNTY

On Monday, March 21st, RFC Kevin Godbee patrolled the Upper Towaliga Reservoir and issued one written warning for fishing without permission.

JONES COUNTY

On the morning of March 20th, RFC Jeremy Reese and USFWS LEO Tom Payne checked a baited property near Piedmont NWR. One hunter was located and was charged with hunting out of season and hunting turkeys over bait.

On March 26th, RFC Reese and Captain Chris Hodge patrolled the county for turkey hunters. Two hunters were located and were issued citations for hunting turkeys over bait.

MERIWETHER COUNTY

On Saturday, March 19th, Cpl. Travis Sweat responded to an illegal fishing call in Meriwether County. Once on scene, Cpl. Sweat observed 4 subjects fishing in a private pond. He watched the subjects for some time until he observed all of them fish. Cpl. Sweat the confronted the subjects and charged the 4 of them with fishing w/o permission. Cpl. Sweat also made them release the fish that they had caught.

On Saturday, March 26th, Cpl. Keith Waddell participated in Cedar Rock Outdoors annual cookout by bringing the laser shot shooting simulator. Numerous young people enjoyed playing the shooting games. Cpl. Waddell also spoke to a number of hunters and educated them on the new Georgia Game Check system.

On Sunday, March 20th, Cpl. Keith Waddell patrolled problem areas in the county. He issued one written warning for fishing without permission and one for non-resident fishing without a license.

PIKE COUNTY

On Saturday, March 19th, Cpl. Travis Sweat patrolled Still Branch Reservoir. Cpl. Sweat patrolled the reservoir looking for fishing and safety violations. Cpl. Sweat checked 10 boats and found 8 violations. The violations included operating a vessel w/o PFD's, fishing w/o a license, operating a vessel with a child under 13 w/o a PFD, and possession of undersize bass.

On Sunday, March 20th, Cpl. Travis Sweat and Cpl. Keith Waddell patrolled Still Branch Reservoir. They issued one citation for fishing without a license, one written warning for undersize fish, one warning for fishing without a license and one warning for a PFD violation.

On Saturday, March 26th, Cpl. Travis Sweat and Cpl. Keith Waddell checked several baited areas. They issued one citation for hunting turkeys over bait, one citation for hunting without a license and one written warning for hunting big game without a big game license. They also confiscated one gobbler.

PUTNAM COUNTY

On the afternoon of March 26th, Cpl. Stanford located a hunter on a powerline. The area had recently had a tripod feeder with cracked corn. Bait was still at the area and a citation was issued for hunting turkeys over bait. Later that evening, Cpl. Stanford interviewed a suspect in reference to the selling of game fish. The suspect admitted to selling game fish and a citation was issued.

TROUP COUNTY

On Sunday, March 13th, RFC Russell Epps, Cpl. Keith Waddell, Intern Kalyn Turner and Sgt. Brent Railey patrolled West Point Lake by truck checking creel limits of bank fishermen. They checked about 80 fishing licenses and 5 boats. Five cases and warnings were issued.

On Tuesday, March 14th, Sgt. Brent Railey assisted with a vessel that was stuck on a mud bar on West Point Lake near Ringer Access. Sgt. Railey assisted with keeping boat traffic off the marine towing service and finding the channel once the stuck boat was back underway.

On Wednesday, March 15th, Sgt. Brent Railey, Cpl. Travis Sweat, Cpl. Wil Smith, Cpl. Bubba Stanford and Captain Chris Hodge responded to a boating incident/drowning in Turkey Creek on West Point Lake. The 70 year old victim had been seen the night before by other fishermen in the parking lot of Whitewater Access and they found his boat anchored in Turkey Creek the morning of the 15th with no one in it. After locating the victim with side scan sonar, the rangers called in the Troup County Sheriff's Office Dive Team who located and recovered the body.

On Wednesday, March 15th, Sgt. Brent Railey and Cpl. Travis Sweat responded to a boat stuck on a mud bar in West Point Lake near Ringer Access after dark. The rangers transported the boat's occupants to shore so they could get a marine tow service to respond the next day.

On Wednesday, March 23rd, RFC Russell Epps patrolled behind West Point Dam. He issued one written warning for fishing without a license.

On Sunday, March 20th, Cpl. Travis Sweat patrolled West Point Lake checking bank fishermen. He issued one written warning for fishing without a license.

On Sunday, March 20th, RFC Russell Epps received a call about a possible boat fire on West Point Lake. He responded to the Sunny Point Access area where he found a boat motor had started smoking heavily and the operator had put the fire out with a fire extinguisher. RFC Epps assisted them in loading the boat on the trailer and got the information for a report.

WILKINSON COUNTY

On the morning of March 23rd, RFC Ronnie Beard and Sgt. Bo Kelly responded to a landowner complaint of hunting without permission. Further investigation led to 3 subjects being charged with hunting hogs without permission.

Region V- Albany (Southwest)

DECATUR COUNTY

On March 26th, Cpl. Tony Cox patrolled areas of Decatur County that he had previously documented as being baited for turkeys. One hunter was located and cited for hunting big game over bait.

MILLER COUNTY

On March 26th, Sgt. Rick Sellars and RFC Steve Thomas located and cited two subjects hunting turkeys in an area that had been baited with cracked corn.

Region VI- Metter (Southeast)

LOWNDES COUNTY

On March 26th, Sergeant Morty Wood and Corporal Tommy Daughtrey checked a turkey blind that was baited with corn. The subject hunting the baited blind shot a turkey as the two officers walked toward the blind. The hunter was charged with hunting big game over bait. The turkey was confiscated.



COFFEE COUNTY

On March 26th, Corporal Tim Hutto checked an area that was baited for turkey. At around 7:30 a.m., Corporal Hutto located a subject hunting approximately fifteen yards from a feeder containing grain sorghum, cracked corn, and wheat seed. The hunter also had several turkey decoys placed in another bait site within shooting distance. One citation was issued for hunting big game over bait.

CHARLTON COUNTY

On the morning of March 26th, Ranger First Class Sam Williams was patrolling for turkey hunting activity in the Winokur area. During the patrol, a hunter was located that had recently harvested a turkey. A check of the hunter's licenses revealed that he had not obtained the new harvest record. RFC Williams assisted the hunter in obtaining a harvest record and recording the turkey online.

WARE COUNTY

On March 26th, Ranger First Class Sam Williams patrolled the lake at Laura Walker State Park for boating and fishing activity. During a check for the required equipment on a vessel, the officer discovered that there were not enough life jackets available for all occupants onboard. The violation for operating vessel with insufficient life jackets was documented.

CLINCH COUNTY

On March 26th, Sergeant Chris Moore and Ranger Judd Sears patrolled for turkey hunting activity north of Fargo. Sgt. Moore and Ranger Sears made contact with multiple hunters during this patrol. Two hunters were found to be hunting turkey with unplugged shotguns. Two violations were documented for hunting with unplugged shotgun. Verbal guidance was given with regards to the new turkey harvest recording and reporting requirements.

On March 26th, Sergeant Patrick Dupree and Corporal Jason Shipes encountered two turkey hunters south of Homerville. Neither hunter possessed a harvest record or was familiar with the new game check system. One of the hunters did not have a plug in his shotgun. Verbal guidance was given to the hunters.

On March 20th, Corporal Dan Stiles patrolled the Hugh M. Gillis Public Fishing Area. Cpl. Stiles checked seven vessels for registration and boating safety equipment and thirty PFA visitors for license and creel limit compliance. Three violations for fishing without a wildlife management area license were documented. Verbal guidance was given to several non-angler visitors for violation of a user fee area and educated visitors on how to obtain a Georgia Outdoor Recreation Pass or obtain a Wildlife Management Area License.

WHEELER COUNTY

On March 25th, Corporal Kevin Joyce and Corporal Dan Stiles patrolled a location for turkey hunting activity. Three hunters were checked. One violation for hunting turkeys over bait was documented.

JENKINS COUNTY

On March 26th, Corporal Mike Wilcox and Sergeant Don Dasher checked two locations that had been baited for turkeys. Two suspects were found hunting turkey over bait. Both individuals were charged with hunting big game over bait. Other violations that were documented were hunting with an unplugged shotgun and hunting without license on person. Later that morning Cpl. Wilcox and Sgt. Dasher checked another hunter that didn't have a big game hunting license. One violation for hunting without a big game license was documented.

SCREVEN COUNTY

On March 26th Corporal Shaymus McNeely encountered two subjects walking out of the woods off Noe road. The subjects were carrying turkey decoys, and an electric feeder. One of them had a twelve gauge shotgun and the other a .22 caliber rifle. During the license check Cpl. McNeely determined one of the subjects did not have a hunting license or a big game license. Cpl. McNeely was able to track the subjects back to where they had come from. At that location a pop up blind baited with corn was located. Violations of hunting big game over bait, hunting with an illegal weapon, hunting without a license, and hunting without a big game license were documented.

TELFAIR COUNTY

On March 26th, Corporal Dan Stiles and Ranger First Class Allen Mills patrolled the Horse Creek Wildlife Management Area for Turkey hunting activity. Six hunters were checked for license and regulation compliance. Verbal guidance was given to three hunters in reference to the new turkey tagging process.

IRWIN COUNTY

On March 26th, Corporal John A Stokes and Corporal Dan Stiles received a call from the sheriff's office for an agency assist to bring a patrol boat. They saw some plastic rolled up floating in the Withlacoochee and thought there might be a body in it. It was determined it was a log and stump.

EVANS COUNTY

On March 26th, Ranger First Class Debbie Brannen checked turkey hunters resulting in one violation for hunting without a big game license. RFC Brannen checked boating and fishing activity on the Evans County Public Fishing area resulting in one violation for fishing on a PFA without a WMA license.

Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)

GLYNN COUNTY

On March 22nd, RFC John Evans, SGT Chris Ridley, and Gary Denis responded to South Brunswick River for a vehicle reported in the river. Officers made it to the vehicle, which had been completely submerged, to confirm there was no one in it. They retrieved information from the truck and determined it had been stolen out of Savannah. The owner was contacted and J&M Towing was called. The rangers assisted the towing company owner, with laying out 450 feet of chain and cable to recover the truck.

On March 22nd 2016, RFC Colte Shaske and the U.S Coast Guard worked together to conduct a patrol off the coast of St. Simons Island, Jekyll Island, and Sapelo Islands. Together the agencies checked multiple boats for safety and fishing violations as part of the Joint Enforcement Agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

On March 24th, RFC John Evans and SGT Chris Ridley responded to a capsized vessel in the Mackay River. The three men in the water were pulled to safety by a local commercial crabber who saw them shortly after the boat sank. After the men were transported to the boat ramp SGT Ridley and the commercial crabber went back to the scene and were able to retrieve the vessel and tow it back to the ramp.

On March 25th, RFC Evans and RFC Jay Bright responded to a call of two missing 12 year old juveniles on Jekyll Island. They assisted GSP and the Jekyll Island Fire Department look for the girls for several hours. They went missing from the north end of the island and had not been seen since about 2:00pm. It was now almost 8:00 pm. The causeway had been shut down and all cars were being checked leaving the island. The search area was being expanded, when the girls were reported being seen on the beach on the south end of the island. A Trooper responded to the area and found the girls. Both were barefoot and had traveled about 7 miles from their home. They were returned safely to their grandparents.

BRANTLEY COUNTY

On March 24th, RFC Evans was working a night hunting complaint when he observed a subject shine the field he was watching. The suspect lived in front of the field and was shining while walking the edge. RFC Evans made contact with violator about twenty yards from his residence. The suspect had a SKS rifle and handheld flashlight. RFC Evans questioned the man about the deer he and another suspect shot the week before, but supposedly missed. The man denied it at first but soon admitted to that incident as well as several other violations. So far both men have been charged with Hunting deer at night, Hunting from a public road, and Hunting from a vehicle. The shooter was also charged with Possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. The investigation is ongoing and other charges are pending.

LIBERTY COUNTY

On 03/24/2016 at approximately 0230 hours Sgt. Scott was patrolling in Liberty County near Hinesville. Sgt. Scott noticed a car stopping in the road and then running a stop sign. The vehicle could not maintain travel in one lane. The car continued to weave across the center line into the on-coming traffic lanes and back across into the right lane. The car attempted to stop at an intersection with a large curb dividing the lanes. Both front and rear driver's side tires went well up onto the curb as the car stopped. Sgt. Scott notified the County of a traffic stop at approximately 0231 hours. The driver was identified and asked why his driving was so erratic. The driver said that he was tired. Sgt. Scott asked the driver what alcoholic beverages he drank and he said none in the past two days. The male passenger said that they had been doing "shots". Officers from the Hinesville Police Department were on scene soon after the vehicle was stopped. A Hinesville Police Officer conducted field

sobriety exercises designed for drivers on the highway. The driver could not begin two of the exercises due to impairment. Baker was placed under arrest for driving under the influence of alcohol and read implied consent by the officer. The driver's blood alcohol was nearly three times the legal limit.

BRYAN COUNTY

On Sunday, March 20, 2016 Corporal Bill Bryson was patrolling south Bryan County for turkey hunters when he found a dump pile of vacuum cleaners and cleaning supplies. Through investigation, Corporal Bryson was able to find the person responsible for the dumping and he was cited for unlawful dumping.

