

# Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

Weekly Report  
May 25-31, 2014

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)**

### **GORDON COUNTY**

On May 25<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Shawn Elmore and RFC Ben Cunningham patrolled the Oostanaula River from Hwy 225 boat ramp to downtown Rome. During the 40 + mile patrol, the rangers checked several boats and issued warnings for fishing without license and registration violations.

On May 26<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Shawn Elmore checked a pond in north Gordon County where he is continuously having problems with fishing without permission. Cpl. Elmore located four people fishing in the pond without permission. Three adults were issued citations for fishing without permission.

On May 28<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Shawn Elmore spoke to the children and youth at Sugar Valley Baptist Church about wildlife in the Gordon County area. Cpl. Elmore used furs to show and describe the features of each animal.



**Lydia Hartsfield poses with a black bear hide at Sugar Valley Baptist Church. Seated behind Lydia is her Poppy, Preacher Mitch Phillips.**

## **FLOYD COUNTY**

On May 26<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Shawn Elmore overheard radio traffic in reference to two missing juveniles in the Pocket area of John's Mtn. WMA. Cpl. Elmore contacted USFS Officer Lee Dillivan and Troopers in the area for assistance. When Cpl. Elmore arrived, the two juveniles had been located and safely returned to their family.

On May 27<sup>th</sup>, around 1030 PM, Cpl. Shawn Elmore checked Heritage Park and located a 19 YO Calhoun man with a blue catfish that looked to weigh around 15 pounds. He was extremely excited and said his girlfriend was coming to take his photograph with the fish. Cpl. Elmore asked the man for his fishing license and he did not have one. The man was issued a warning for fishing without license and the blue cat was released back into the Coosa River.

## **HARALSON COUNTY**

May 26<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Wil Smith and RFC Daniel Gray conducted a vessel patrol on Seabreeze Lake in Buchanan. 4 individuals were cited for fishing w/o license, operating vessel w/o safety equipment, and operating vessel w/o PFD's.

On May 27<sup>th</sup>, RFC Chad Cox responded to a call at 3:30am in reference to two 22 year girls missing on the Tallapoosa River near the Alabama state line. RFC Cox along with GSP Trooper J. Daniel patrolled the river by boat looking for the girls. They had gone missing at midnight after inner tubing the river with other people. Haralson County Sheriff's Department, Haralson County Fire Department and GSP Aviation were also looking for the girls. Both girls were found safe by searchers just after daylight in Alabama.

## **CARROLL COUNTY**

On May 24<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Eric Brown and RFC Chad Cox patrolled Carroll and Douglas Counties for fishing and boating activity. While patrolling Snake Creek Reservoir, several subjects were cited for operating vessels without personal floatation devices and fishing without a license.

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

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

### **LAKE OCONEE**

On May 30 – JUNE 1, Sgt. John Harwell, Cpl. Derrell Worth, RFC Richard Tanner and RFC Ricky Boles patrolled Lake Oconee for fishing and boating violations. Among the violations were, operating vessel within 100' of object in water, insufficient PFD's, operating vessel with no stern light, allowing under age child to ride in moving vessel without PFD, failure to obey regulatory marker, towing skier with no observer and taking game fish by illegal methods.

On Friday, May 30, RFC Ricky Boles and RFC Richard Tanner encountered a group of fisherman that was collecting snails in Lake Oconee. After further investigation, it was determined they had several fish and a cast net hidden in their car. One of the individuals admitted to catching the fish with the cast net. The fisherman was placed under arrest and transported to the Putnam County jail and charged with taking game fish by illegal methods. He had 40 bream, 1 large mouth and one catfish. The fish had been sitting in the car for several hours and had spoiled so the Rangers had to dispose of them.



#### **ELBERT COUNTY**

On May 31<sup>st</sup> Cpl. Julian Wilkins and RFC Phillip Nelson conducted a patrol of the Vaughter WMA. Two violations of driving on a closed road were documented.

#### **LINCOLN COUNTY**

On May 25<sup>th</sup> Sgt. Brian Carter and Cpl. Mark Patterson patrolled Clarks Hill Lake in Lincoln and Elbert Counties. Violations documented were operating a vessel with insufficient personal flotation devices.

## **RICHMOND COUNTY**

On May 31, Cpl. Ben Payne, RFC Jeff Billips and RFC Grant Matherly patrolled Richmond County checking without permission complaints and fishing licenses. No violations were encountered during the patrol. The Rangers were scheduled to patrol the Savannah River by boat, but due to inclement weather the patrol was cut short.

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

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

### **LAKE GEORGE**

Officers patrolling Lake George and the Chattahoochee River issued eighteen citations and warnings and provided two citizen assists. One individual was arrested on an outstanding warrant and possession of marijuana charge.

### **LAKE SEMINOLE**

Officers patrolling Lake Seminole and portions of the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers issued ten citations and warnings, provided two citizen assists and arrested three individuals for boating under the influence with three counts of child endangerment. Another individual was arrested for obstruction, disorderly conduct and public drunkenness.

### **LAKE WORTH**

Officers patrolling Lake Worth and portions of the Flint River issued ten citations and warnings, arrested one individual for boating under the influence with two counts of child endangerment.

### **LAKE BLACKSHEAR**

Officers patrolling Lake Blackshear and portions of the Flint River issued thirty-seven citations and warnings and arrested two individuals for boating under the influence.

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

### **WHEELER COUNTY**

On Sunday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. John Stokes and RFC Rodney Horne patrolled the Oconee and Ocmulgee rivers on a vessel patrol. Eight violations were documented for operating a vessel without registration, operating a vessel without personal flotation devices, and operating a vessel within 100 feet of an object in the water above idle speed.

### **LAURENS COUNTY**

On May 25<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Dan Stiles and RFC Allen Mills patrolled the Oconee River. Twenty six vessels were checked for registration and safety equipment compliance and sixteen anglers were also checked for license compliance and creel limits. Violations documented were operating a vessel without registration and operating a vessel with insufficient C.G.A. PFD's.

The officers also patrolled the Hugh M. Gillis Public Fishing Area. Nine anglers were checked for license and creel compliance. No violations were detected.

On May 26<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Dan Stiles and RFC Allen Mills patrolled the Beaverdam WMA. Four GORP/WMA licenses were checked at the shooting range. The officers also patrolled the Oconee River and checked seven vessels for boating safety and registration requirements and nine anglers were checked for fishing licenses and creel limits. Two violations were documented for fishing without license on person and fishing without a license.

### **SCREVEN COUNTY**

On May 24<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Mike Wilcox, Cpl. Shaymus McNeely, and Sgt. Don Dasher responded to a call about a hunting incident that occurred on Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area. The call came from the GSP Statesboro office. It was reported that a hunter had shot himself in the leg with a crossbow while hunting on the management area. The exact location was unknown. The victim and a witness that were hunting together were located off of Old River Road near Bay Road. The victim managed to stick a cedar shaft with a broadhead into the side of his leg. The victim was flown to Augusta for treatment. Cpl. McNeely and Sgt. Dasher talked to the witness and obtained a statement about what happened. Later Cpl. Wilcox and Sgt. Dasher photographed and collected evidence for documenting the incident. It turned out the victim didn't shoot himself in the leg with a crossbow. He was hunting with a recurve bow and his arrows fell out of his quiver when he was walking through some brush. He stumbled backwards and the arrow stuck into his leg. The victim had the arrow removed from his leg at the hospital and is recovering at home.

### **EFFINGHAM COUNTY**

On May 26<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Shaymus McNeely and Cpl. Mike Wilcox conducted a vessel patrol on the Savannah River from Poor Robin Landing in Screven County down to Tuckasee King Landing in Effingham County. A few miles upriver from Tuckasee King Officers were engaged in a boat stop when another boat traveling up river failed to slow down and attempted to pass the patrol boat well within 100 feet. Upon stopping this boat Cpl. McNeely observed that the driver smelled of alcohol and appeared to be intoxicated. After completing a battery of standardized field sobriety exercises the driver was arrested and charged with operating a vessel under the influence of alcohol and operating a vessel above idle speed within 100 feet of an object.

On May 25<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Eddie Akins and Ranger Jordan Crawford patrolled the Savannah River in the area between Tuckasee King Landing and Ebenezer Landing for boating and fishing activity. Their efforts resulted in seven boats being checked and five violations being documented. The violations were for allowing underage child to ride in a moving vessel without wearing a PFD, operating a vessel within 100 feet of object/shore above idle speed, operating vessel at night without lights and operating a vessel with expired registration.

On May 31<sup>st</sup>, CPL. Eddie Akins and Ranger Jordan Crawford responded to call from Effingham County Sheriff's Office regarding an overdue boater. The boater had been missing since the previous afternoon and was unable to be reached by phone. After a short search by boat, CPL. Akins and Ranger Crawford was able to locate the missing boater and returned him and his vessel back to Ebenezer boat ramp.

### **JENKINS COUNTY**

On May 31<sup>st</sup>, Cpl. Mike Wilcox and Sgt Don Dasher patrolled the Ogeechee River in Jenkins County. The officers patrolled from the Bull Hole boat landing up to the Emanuel County line and down to the Farfield landing before having to leave the river due to thunderstorms. While on the river, the officers checked several boats who were engaged in fishing. Several violations were documented. The officers documented anglers for fishing without fishing license, operating a vessel without CGA PFDs, and allowing an underage child to ride in a vessel without wearing a PFD.

### **BULLOCH COUNTY**

On May 31<sup>st</sup>, Cpl. Eddie Akins and Ranger Jordan Crawford patrolled the Ogeechee River from Williams Landing to above 301 landing for boating and fishing activity. Their efforts resulted in eighteen boats and twenty-two fishing licenses being checked. Two violations were documented. The violations were for operating a vessel without PFDs and fishing without a license.

### **BERRIEN**

On May 30<sup>th</sup>, RFC Tim Hutto and intern Johnathan Day patrolled Paradise PFA and areas along the Alapaha River for boating and fishing related activity. Ten citations and warnings were issued for fishing without a WMA license on a PFA, possession of undersize bass, fishing without a license, non-res fishing without a license, operating a vessel without life jackets, and interference with the performance of a ranger's duties.

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

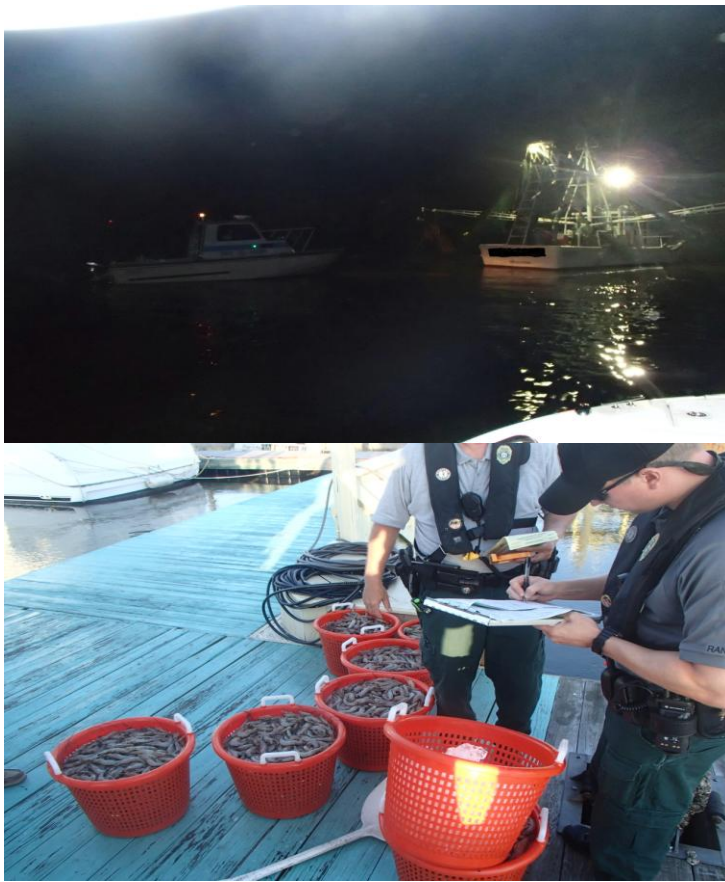
### **BRYAN COUNTY**

On May 25<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Jason Miller and Cpl. Jay Morgan conducted a Memorial Day weekend holiday boat patrol in the Medway River/Jerico River/Isle of Wight areas. One adult on a Personal Watercraft (PWC) was cited for operating a PWC without wearing a life jacket and for operating above idle speed within 100 feet of docks at Isle of Wight.

On May 26<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Jason Miller and Cpl. Bill Bryson patrolled the Medway River and St. Catherine's Sound areas. One boater was cited for operating a vessel above idle speed within 100 feet of a dock.

## **CHATHAM COUNTY**

On May 31st, Cpl. Jay Morgan and Sgt. Phillip Scott conducted a night patrol offshore of Ossabaw and St. Catherine's Islands to check for illegal shrimping in the state waters out to the three-mile limit which at that time was closed to commercial fishing. The rangers found a 44-foot shrimp boat operating without any lights on and dragging its nets approximately 1.1 miles inside closed waters off Ossabaw Island. The boat was boarded and then escorted to its Sunbury dock. Cpl. Chris Moore and RFC Kiel Toney assisted with the escort and measurement of the shrimp boat's Turtle Excluder Devices that allow sea turtles to escape from the nets. The captain and two crew members were cited for using power-drawn nets in closed waters. The captain was also cited for operating a vessel without lights during hours of darkness and for possession of undersized flounder. 708 pounds of shrimp were confiscated and sold for \$3577.65 which will go into the State general fund if the captain is found guilty at trial.



**DNR boat escorting shrimp boat and rangers with confiscated shrimp.**



### **LIBERTY COUNTY**

On May 25<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Bill Bryson and Sgt. Phillip Scott patrolled the Medway River and St. Catherine's Sound areas. One fisherman was cited for possession of undersized black sea bass and for possession of sharks without heads and tails intact. Two boaters were also cited for not having enough life jackets on board.

On the evening of May 26<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Phillip Scott received a call about three men whose boat had become disabled with a dead battery in the Sunbury area. Cpl. Bill Bryson and Cpl. Jay Morgan responded, found the men stranded in Dickerson Creek, and towed them back to the Sunbury boat ramp.

### **MCINTOSH COUNTY**

On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, Sgt. Damon Winters was checking fishing areas off Hwy 99. Sgt. Winters checked a fisherman named James McCormick fishing off a dock in the Meridian area. While checking the fish Mr. McCormick had caught he pulled a 30 lbs. plus Jack out of his cooler! Mr. McCormick caught the monster in a tidal creek less than 20 yards wide.