

# Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

Field Operations

**Weekly Report**  
**May 10 – May 16, 2015**

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.

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## **Region I- Calhoun (Northwest)**

### **BARTOW COUNTY**

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, RFC Zack Hardy and RFC Bart Hendrix responded to an abandoned vessel complaint on Allatoona Lake near Allatoona Landing. The two rangers located an abandoned pontoon floating in the middle of the lake. Upon arrival, the rangers examined the vessel for possible evidence of it being abandoned. During the investigation, the rangers were able to find the vessel's current owner by a Wal-Mart receipt that indicated that a fishing license had been purchased the day before. All parties from the vessel were accounted for and the owner returned to the lake to retrieve his vessel.

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Byron Young and RFC Bart Hendrix responded to an abandoned vessel call on Allatoona Lake near Stamp Creek. The Rangers searched for 1 ½ hours for the vessel without success. The Rangers checked with several bass fishermen in the area to see if they had seen the abandoned vessel. The vessel was never located.

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Mike Barr was on foot patrol checking the boat ramp at Bethany Bridge on Allatoona Lake. Sgt. Barr was approached by two citizens and advised that two men were hanging onto a White PWC and were yelling for help. The PWC was across the lake from Red Top Mt. State Park. Sgt. Barr called Cpl. Byron Young and RFC Zack Hardy who were on vessel patrol. The officers quickly responded and located an adult male and a juvenile in the water holding onto the PWC. The male was in a panic and physically exhausted. His PFD was not properly secured and was over his head. The officers had to physically pull the male and the juvenile from the water onto the patrol boat. The adult and juvenile were transported by patrol boat to Park Marina.

### **CHEROKEE COUNTY**

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, RFC Bart Hendrix received a call about a boat incident that occurred on May 9<sup>th</sup> on Allatoona Lake. The incident occurred between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. near Harbor Town Marina. The incident is still under investigation. RFC Hendrix examined both vessels and observed moderate damage to both vessels. Thankfully there were no injuries in the 2 vessel collision.

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

### **WHITE COUNTY**

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Steve Seitz, RFC Chad Chambers, and intern Holdan Kellar patrolled along the Chattahoochee River on Chattahoochee WMA checking for fishing activity. The officers issued two warnings for fishing license violations and fishing after obtaining the creel limit during the patrol of the WMA.

This weekend was the VW/Audi car rally in Helen, GA which drew a large number of people to the area, so Sgt. Seitz and Cpl. Dillard asked the Georgia State Patrol and White county Sheriff's office traffic unit to assist on Unicoi State Park with any traffic issues due to the large number of people in the area. Throughout this weekend, GSP and White county SO issued many citations for parking in restricted areas, speeding, DUI, drug possession, and other traffic offenses.

During the afternoon, Sgt. Seitz, RFC Chambers, and intern Kellar later patrolled Unicoi state park and issued one citation for parking in an unauthorized area on Smith Creek.

Later this same evening, Sgt. Seitz and Cpl. Derek Dillard patrolled Unicoi State Park and located seven vehicles parked in a No Parking area along Hwy 356. The officers issued two citations for parking in a restricted area and discovered some of the drivers were from Canada and did not have the proper documents to legally drive in Georgia. The officers called a State Trooper who was in the area to handle these violations. The Trooper wrote several citations for license and parking violations.

Cpl. Dillard later assisted the Georgia State Patrol hold a road check on Hwy 356 at the Dam on Unicoi State Park. The officers arrested 10 people for DUI and a couple more for possession of marijuana during the road check.

On May 17<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Steve Seitz and RFC Chad Chambers patrolled along the Chattahoochee River on Chattahoochee WMA for fishing activity. The officers issued citations and warnings for fishing without permission and fishing without a trout license. The officers later patrolled Unicoi State Park and issued three warnings for parking in a restricted area and fishing without a license and trout license.

### **MADISON COUNTY**

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, while working the Broad River RFC Shane Sartor observed two subjects smoking what he believed to be marijuana. The subjects were questioned by RFC Sartor. The marijuana was found and two citations for VGCSA were issued.

On May 14<sup>th</sup>, while working the Broad River RFC Shane Sartor observed a male subject smoking what he believed to be marijuana. The subject was questioned and he admitted to having more marijuana with him. The marijuana was turned over to RFC Sartor and the subject was issued a citation for VGCSA.

### **HART COUNTY**

On May 14<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Craig Fulghum completed an Osprey nesting project in North Hart County. The nesting site was needed due to a nearby nest being torn down due to cutting timber. Hart EMC donated the pole and assisted with putting the pole in the ground. The next day two Osprey were seen sitting on the nesting site. Thanks to Hart EMC for their assistance with this project!



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

### **RICHMOND COUNTY**

On May 15, Cpl. Payne worked fishing activity in Richmond County. He checked landowner complaints, creeks and the Savannah River. Fourteen fishermen were checked with citations issued to 4 individuals for fishing without license. Two fishermen at the Lock and Dam were close to their limits of redbreast bream.

On May 16, Cpl. Payne worked the Savannah River by boat and assisted with Paddle Fest. Entries in the race were kayaks, canoes, and homemade rafts. During the event several boats were checked. Two citations and one warning were written to non-entry boaters.

### **CLARKE COUNTY**

On Saturday May 16, while on patrol for boating and fishing activity in the Athens area RFC Phillip Nelson documented five cases of fishing without a license.

### **BURKE COUNTY**

On May 16, Ranger First Class Jeff Billips patrolled the Ogeechee River. RFC Billips checked 20 vessels and 44 fishermen in the Midville area of the river. Violations included fishing without license, operating vessel without PFD, allowing underage child to ride in vessel not wearing PFD, littering, and no required fire extinguisher on board.

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

### **HARRIS COUNTY**

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Mitch Oliver was checking fishing and boating activity on Goat Rock. Cpl. Oliver checked 3 fishermen and 1 of the men didn't have a non-resident fishing license. After some further discussion with the same fisherman, it was determined that he was in possession of a small amount of marijuana. The subject was charged with non-resident fishing without a license and possession of marijuana less than an ounce.

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, while still at Goat Rock, Cpl. Oliver observed a personal watercraft (PWC) towing a tuber without an observer. Cpl. Oliver stopped the PWC and noticed that it was only designed for 2 people instead of the mandatory 3 person PWC. The operator was issued a citation for towing a skier with a PWC without an observer.



### **MERIWETHER COUNTY**

During the winter of 2014-2015, Cpl. Keith Waddell and Cpl. Travis Sweat worked with a third grade class at Cowan Road Elementary School in Spalding County to build several wood duck boxes. They materials were donated from a local Home Depot and the class participated in building and setting up the boxes on Joe Kurz WMA in Meriwether County. On Thursday May 14, 2015 the class returned to Joe Kurz to inspect the boxes they helped build and set up.



## **MUSCOGEE COUNTY**

On May 12<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Mitch Oliver and Captain Bob Lynn attended a Law Enforcement Awareness and Appreciation Day at Calvary Christian School. There were several agencies represented at the event and the students seemed to have a good time interacting with the officers. Cpl. Oliver had his patrol truck and Triton patrol boat on hand for the students to look at and answered many questions about a Conservation Rangers' daily duties.

On May 15<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Jeremy Bolen was checking fishing activity along the Chattahoochee River in Columbus. Cpl. Bolen noticed an individual throwing a cast net into the river. After speaking with the individual, Cpl. Bolen discovered that he was keeping game fish. The fisherman had 1 spotted bass and 4 bream that were caught in the cast net and he said he planned to fish with them later that night. The subject was issued a citation for taking game fish by illegal method and the fish were released back into the river.

## **PUTNAM COUNTY**

On the afternoon of May 10<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Matthew Johnson patrolled Wallace Dam. Ranger Johnson issued 2 citations to boat operators for operating a vessel in a boating safety zone.

On the afternoon of May 16<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Lynn Stanford patrolled Wallace Dam and issued 1 citation for operating a vessel in a boating safety zone. Later that evening Cpl. Stanford located a 4x4 pick up stuck in a mud pit on BF Grant WMA. The incident is still under investigation.

## **WILKINSON COUNTY**

On the morning of May 11<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Matt Johnson and Cpl. Lynn Stanford participated in Career Day at Wilkinson County Elementary School. The officers showed the children a DNR patrol boat and discussed boating safety.

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

### **CRISP COUNTY**

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Bob Holley and Ranger Jay Lewis were patrolling Lake Blackshear when they observed a boat being operated without the required registration numbers displayed. A vessel stop was conducted and during the stop it was determined that the operator was under the influence of alcohol. The operator was placed under arrest and transported to the Crisp County Jail where he was cited for operating a vessel under the influence of alcohol and operating a vessel without the registration numbers displayed.

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

### **WARE COUNTY**

On May 15<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Judd Sears patrolled Laura Walker State Park for fishing activity. Multiple anglers were inspected for fishing license requirements and creel limits. Ranger Sears encountered three subjects fishing off the bank during this patrol and it was found that one of the subjects was fishing without a license and one subject was consuming alcohol on the state park. Citations for fishing without a license and for consuming alcohol on a state park were issued.

### **JENKINS COUNTY**

On May 16<sup>th</sup> Corporal Mike Wilcox and Sergeant Don Dasher patrolled the Ogeechee River near the Bull Hole Landing. Several boats and fishing licenses were checked. Several violations were documented for fishing without a license, operating a vessel without CGA PFDs, and operating a vessel without registration.

## **EMANUEL COUNTY**

On Monday March 11<sup>th</sup> Sergeant Don Dasher received a call from the Emanuel County Sheriff's Office for assistance to help search for a missing person. Sgt. Dasher also contacted Ranger Jordan Crawford, Ranger First Class Clint Jarriel, and Corporal Kevin Joyce to assist with the search. The area of the search was in the southern part of Emanuel County on the Ochoopee River. RFC Jarriel and Sgt, Dasher were the first two Rangers to arrive. They launched their patrol boat and began searching the river. They received a call that the Georgia State Patrol helicopter had spotted someone matching the missing person's description on a sandbar. The Rangers located the missing person and transported him back upstream to his family.

## **EFFINGHAM COUNTY**

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, Ranger Jordan Crawford and Sergeant Don Dasher patrolled the Ogeechee River looking for fishing and boating activity. Several boats were checked with no violations documented.

## **BULLOCH COUNTY**

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Eddie Akins and Ranger Jordan Crawford patrolled the Ogeechee River from Steel Bridge to above Woodard's Landing. Their efforts resulted in twenty boats being checked and twenty-one fishing licenses being checked. A total of seven violations were documented. The violations were a combination of fishing without a license, operating a vessel without a registration and operating a vessel with insufficient number of PFD's.

On May 11<sup>th</sup> 2015, Ranger Jordan Crawford received a call regarding an incident that took place on May 10<sup>th</sup> in Bulloch County. Bulloch County Sheriff's Deputies had raided a house off Bell Road after a foot chase involving a wanted suspect that ended at the home. Upon entering the home Deputies found several individuals involved in illegal drug activities and those individuals were subsequently taken into custody. Upon a further search of the house Deputies found a 3 foot alligator in the homeowner's bathtub. Ranger Crawford interviewed the homeowner later the next day at the Bulloch County Jail. The suspect admitted to catching the alligator and holding it in his home. The suspect was charged with holding a wild animal without a permit.

## **LOWNDES COUNTY**

On May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Ranger First Class Keith McDonald and Ranger First Class Daniel North assisted Valdosta Police Department search for a missing Alzheimer's patient in Valdosta. RFC McDonald and RFC North used their ATV's to search the woods behind the patient's house.

## **BERRIEN COUNTY**

On May 17<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Morty Wood and Cpl. Tim Hutto patrolled Paradise PFA for boating and fishing violations. Four violations were documented for fishing on a PFA without a WMA license, operating a vessel with insufficient life jackets, and illegal consumption of alcohol.

## **IRWIN COUNTY**

On May 12<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Tim Hutto presented safety programs to seven first grade classes on ATV safety and boating safety at Irwin County Elementary School. Later in the day Cpl. Hutto, K-9 Titan, and RFC Keith McDonald presented K-9 demonstrations to around two hundred third graders and their teachers. The demonstration included obedience, evidence recovery, and suspect apprehension.

## **DODGE COUNTY**

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Dan Stiles conducted a vessel patrol on the Ocmulgee River. Five vessels were checked for boating safety equipment, and nine anglers were checked for license and creel compliance. No violations were detected.

On May 16th, Ranger First Class Allen Mills patrolled boat landings from northwest Dodge County to southern Telfair County. Nine vessels were inspected for safety equipment and sixteen anglers were checked for license and creel compliance. One vessel operator was given standardized field sobriety tests for Boating Under the Influence (BUI), and was found not to be impaired. The vessel operator was charged for operating a vessel without Coast Guard approved personnel flotation devices (life jackets). An angler was also charged for fishing without a license.

#### **BEN HILL COUNTY**

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, Corporal John A Stokes assisted the Ben Hill-Irwin Baptist Association with a fishing event at the Baptist camp ground. Kids and adults got to catch catfish, and were provided with a lunch and social events afterwards.

#### **TELFAIR COUNTY**

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, Ranger First Class Rodney Horne was on patrol looking for fishing and boating safety violations on the Ocmulgee River in Telfair County. RFC Horne investigated a person for boating under the influence of alcohol. RFC Horne documented a violation for operating a vessel without registration.

#### **LAURENS COUNTY**

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, Ranger First Class Rodney Horne was conducting a night patrol at one of the Oconee River landings in Laurens County. RFC Horne documented violations for operating a vessel at night without lights, operating a vessel without registration, and for operating a vessel without Coast Guard approved personnel flotation devices (PFD).

#### **EVANS COUNTY**

On May 10, Corporal Kevin Joyce patrolled the Evans County PFA for boating and fishing activity. Multiple subjects were checked resulting in violations for entering a designated fee area without a GORP.

On May 16, Ranger First Class Debbie Brannen assisted the Evans County Sheriff's office with a search of a missing 65 year old male subject. The subject was found deceased and in a slough off the Canoochee River in the area of Hendrix Bridge Road. He was reported missing on May 13, 2015. The case was turned over to the Evans County Sheriff's Office and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

#### **TATTNALL COUNTY**

On May 16, Ranger First Class Debbie Brannen and Sergeant Jon Barnard patrolled the Ohoopsee River. Numerous licenses and boats were checked resulting in violations for operating a vessel with insufficient PFD's, fishing without a license, non-resident fishing without a license and operating a vessel without a registration were documented.

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

No activity to report.