



# GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Commissioner  
Mark Williams

Director  
Colonel Eddie  
Henderson



Law  
Enforcement  
*Off the  
Pavement*

Serving  
Since  
1911

**Law Enforcement Division  
FY 2017 Annual Report**

# Headquarters



**Colonel Eddie Henderson, Director**



**Lt. Colonel Jeff Weaver,  
Assistant Director**



**Major Stephen Adams**



**Major Thomas Barnard**

# Headquarters Support Staff



**Jen Hammonds**



**Jamie Hawkins**



**Lt. Wayne Hubbard**



**Capt. Wade Law**



**Linda Mayo**



**PAO Mark McKinnon**



**Kathy Plumley**



**Sharon Sims**



**Lt. Judd Smith**



**Shannon Witcher**



**Sharon Whitaker**

**The Vision of the Law Enforcement Division is to ensure that Georgia’s natural resources will be conserved for our present and future generations.**

**The Mission of the Law Enforcement Division is to conserve our natural resources and to protect the people we serve. We maintain public support through fair and vigorous law enforcement, quality education, and community involvement. We commit ourselves to our Vision and Mission by practicing our core beliefs, which are trust, fairness and professionalism.**



## **Headquarters**

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement Division, currently has 190 POST-certified Game Wardens with statewide authority and full arrest powers. The primary duties of these Game Wardens are enforcement of all laws and regulations pertaining to hunting, fishing, commercial fishing, environmental violations, and recreational boating, as well as to provide public safety on all our DNR-controlled properties.

The Law Enforcement Division operates with a straight-line chain of command. It consists of the Colonel, Lt. Colonel, three Majors (field operations, special operations and aviation), seven Region Supervisors (Captains), two “specialty” Captains (investigations, and administrative support), two pilot Captains, three Lieutenants (database management, training and special permits/captive wildlife and wild animals), and 171 field Game Wardens (Sergeants, Corporals, Ranger First Class, and Rangers).

## Equipment

The Division continued to purchase additional Glock Model 43s for issuance to new Game Wardens who will graduate Game Warden Academy in 2018. These back-up weapons were issued to all Game Wardens in 2016. The Model 43, along with all other issued firearms, is now introduced to new cadets during the Game Warden Academy as part of firearms training.

With funds provided by the Georgia Natural Resources Foundation, 60 pieces of body armor were replaced this past year. The Division is currently using Alpha Elite by Point Blank body armor.

The Division completed a patrol rifle upgrade with \$47,000 in funds received during the annual Weekend for Wildlife event. In 2007, Game Wardens were issued military surplus M-16s. In 2015, the process began to upgrade the rifles by replacing the upper assemblies with 14.5" Daniel Defense uppers. This year, the Daniel Defense lower assemblies were purchased, completing the upgrade and totally replacing the surplus rifle. Transition training to the upgraded rifles is scheduled for the fall.

The Division received a generous mid budget year funding amendment that resulted in the purchase of 53 patrol vehicles. This will greatly improve the status of the division's fleet and will replace vehicles that have been in service since as far back as 2008. Ford has the state contract and Field Game Wardens are issued an F-150 extended cab and supervisors the F-150 Crew Cab. In addition, the Division utilized Recreational Boating Safety Grant Funds to replace six patrol boats in the fleet. The majority of the inland impoundments utilize a 20'-24' Center Console platform equipped with side scan sonar equipment. The division's coastal region utilized JEA funding to replace a 16-year-old, 35-foot Contender that was at the end of its service life, with a 38' Impact from Boston Whaler, configured with an enclosed cabin. This new offshore boat is equipped with triple Mercury 350 Verado Outboard motors, A/C, and a Garmin Chart plotter with radar and side scan sonar capabilities. It will be used for offshore and near shore patrols. The vessel will also allow Game Wardens to patrol Marine Protected Areas (MPA's) located 80-115 miles off the coast.





The Law Enforcement Division recently acquired, at no cost to the Department, a Mobile Command Vehicle from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency. The Command Vehicle will be used for a wide variety of incidents including natural disasters, wildfires, prolonged search and rescue missions, and planned events. It will provide interoperability with other agencies and a place to

coordinate efforts and set up Incident Command. The vehicle is equipped with a wide variety of radio systems including VHF, 800 MHz, and Southern Linc that can be tied together via the ACU1000 Audio Gateway. It also has a satellite phone, allowing multiple agencies to communicate more easily at an incident scene. The vehicle will be a valuable asset, not only to the Law Enforcement Division, but also to the entire Department.

The Law Enforcement Division is completing a radio system transition from analog to digital VHF. In 2011 when it was mandated that all VHF systems be narrow-banded, there was a significant loss in coverage from the 46 statewide repeater sites and the mobile units. To offset that, the transition to digital began and the coverage has significantly increased. Bond funds were used to purchase 32 new digital-capable repeaters. The Division will have a 100% digital statewide repeater system, with all infrastructure less than seven years old.

### **GILEE**

Captain Johnny Johnson participated in the 24<sup>th</sup> Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange (GILEE) program to Israel. This two-week training session, coordinated through Georgia State University, focuses on sharing homeland security techniques as well as the benefits and limitations of a national police system. During the program, 19 Law Enforcement Executives from Georgia were briefed at multiple venues in the state of Israel.

### **Institutionalizing Game Warden Title**

In Georgia Law, a DNR law enforcement officer has the title of Conservation Ranger. After careful consideration, the Command Staff decided to pursue obtaining the working title of Game Warden, to clear the public's confusion with park rangers, army rangers and forest rangers, and since it more clearly defines the core mission of the officers. Col. Henderson consulted with the Commissioner's Office and the decision was made to use "Game Warden" as the working title. State laws have not, and will not be changed since it is a working title and not an official job title change. Moving forward, vehicles will be marked to reflect the change, as well as other new equipment, clothing, and branding items.

### **Ranger Hotline**

The Ranger Hotline program, which provides a way for citizens to report anonymously potentially illegal wildlife and other conservation law violations, continues to be successful. If the information leads to an arrest, the tipster receives a cash reward funded by the Georgia Natural Resource Foundation, whose mission is to protect wildlife by increasing public support for wildlife law enforcement. In 2016, 401 tips were received by email for various violations.

### **LED License Plate**

The 2016 Georgia Legislature approved a new automobile license plate, to be designed by the Division, and sold to citizens for an additional fee. Part of the revenue generated from the sale of the plates will go to DNR Law Enforcement for operational costs. One of the Game Wardens in the Coastal Region designed the plate and pre-sales are currently underway.



### **New Headquarters Facility and Fallen Game Warden Monument**

In December, Law Enforcement Headquarters moved into a newly renovated building on the Social Circle campus. The facility also includes a 1,600-square foot warehouse and a helipad. Adjacent to the entrance, a beautiful eight-foot high black granite monument, in the shape of Georgia, was erected. The Georgia DNR Fallen Game Warden Memorial, complete with Georgia and American flags on either side, honors the eight Game Wardens who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

### **Recruitment Video**

As part of an aggressive recruiting effort, LED Public Affairs produced a short video highlighting the duties of Georgia Game Wardens and encouraging qualified individuals to submit an application. The video features video clips and still photos shot during the last year, informational text, and high-energy, royalty-free background music. The video can be viewed at this URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jeYiTeVHOxY>

## **SPLASH**

The Division, along with Georgia's First Lady Sandra Deal and a number of federal, state, and private partners, began an aggressive anti-drowning campaign called SPLASH. The acronym SPLASH encourages citizens to follow these tips when enjoying beaches, pools, lakes, rivers and other bodies of water:

- **Supervision** – Designate an adult to watch children at all times. Do not assume someone else is watching.
- **Prevention** – Wear personal flotation devices (PFD or life jacket), install fencing around pools, and use drain covers in hot tubs and pools.
- **Look before you leap** – Never jump into water without knowing how deep it is and what is below the surface.
- **Arm's Length** – Adults should be arm's length to children in water, and life jackets and throwable flotation devices should be nearby at all times.
- **Swim Lessons** – Knowing how to swim greatly reduces the chance of drowning.
- **Have a Water Safety Plan** – Know what to do during an emergency.

The campaign includes bilingual brochures, public service announcements and videos, social media messaging, and safety messages painted on boat ramps using stencils. The Department is also in the process of adding life jacket loaner boards at public boat ramps and state parks, with these locations now included on the Georgia Outdoors app.

## **OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES**

### **HB 208 - License Fee Increase to Add New Game Wardens**

This bill, which passed during the 2017 legislative session, increases hunting, fishing, and recreational license fees, bringing them in line with neighboring states' fees. The Law Enforcement Division will utilize a percentage of the new revenue for additional personnel and other enforcement and operational costs.

The Division experienced an unprecedented year in the area of receiving pay increases. At the beginning of FY-17, all certified personnel within the division received a 6% pay raise. Then, at the mid-year of the state budget cycle, Governor Nathan Deal called for major law enforcement reform, which included a 20% pay increase for any state law enforcement officers who were on the front lines and completed new, mandatory annual in service training in the areas of de-escalation and community policing. This raise affected the Division by providing a 20% raise for the rank of Captain and below.

### **Matthew/West Mims/Tatum Gulf/Albany Tornado X 2/ Ice Storm**

Game Wardens responded to several natural disasters in the state this past year from wildfires in the North West Georgia Mountains and the Okefenokee Swamp, Hurricane Matthew on the Georgia Coast, multiple tornadoes in Southwest Georgia and two ice storms in the North Georgia area. Game Wardens provided first responder operations, debris clearing with chain saws, damage assessment, search and rescue and security roles during these events.

### **JEA Patrols**

Coastal Game Wardens just completed the 15<sup>th</sup> Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) with NOAA. They patrolled saltwater areas inshore and offshore for 989 hours, using twin-engine boats for 245 hours, single-engine boats for 217 hours, and patrolling dockside for 196 hours. They spent 50 hours patrolling Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, 76 hours on Atlantic Right Whales violations, 78 hours for outreach (I&Es), 50 hours by aircraft, and 77 administrative hours. They detected a number of Federal Fisheries violations including over the limit of fish, possession of illegal species, illegal nets, and Turtle Excluder Device (TED) violations. These documented violations were turned over to NOAA for prosecution or handled in local courts.

### **DNR Re-Organization Period Continues**

The Georgia DNR Law Enforcement Division completed the fourth year of a five-year transition that will consolidate all Law Enforcement functions under the umbrella of the Law Enforcement Division, to include State Parks enforcement. In 2013, the Board of Natural Resources approved the internal reorganization of its operational Divisions that elevated the Law Enforcement Section to Division Status, removing it as a sub-program in the Wildlife Resources Division. The changes to the DNR structure were made to more accurately reflect the working structure of the department, streamline operations, clarify chain of command, standardize training, equipment and operational guidance for law enforcement services and to reduce liability.

### **Public Affairs**

#### Media Relations and Public Outreach

The Division conducted media news conferences and ride-alongs with Rangers for the start of the boating and hunting seasons, "Operation Dry Water," and the July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday weekend to promote safe boating and swimming safety and to educate citizens on boating laws and how they are applied. Prior to boating season, in late May, LED partnered with the Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) and the Georgia State Patrol (GSP) to encourage safety on the waterways and highways throughout the summer. The 2017 campaign was called the "Summer17 Safety Tour." News releases, I & E presentations and speeches to various civic groups, and regular news media interviews and interaction were utilized throughout the year to disseminate information to the public.

### Social Media

LED manages a Facebook page that currently has nearly 47,000 page “Likes” (people who regularly view the page). Many of LED’s Facebook posts have a “Reach” (number of people who may see the post through their friends who “Like” the page) that exceeds 40,000, and occasionally, some are above 100,000. The Division also has a Twitter account that is linked to Facebook, which currently has over 1,100 followers, a YouTube Channel with multiple safety-related videos, and an Instagram account with over 4,100 followers.

### “Off the Pavement” Awards Banquet

In August 2016, the LED’s Command Staff was joined by the Georgia DNR Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Board Members at the Third Annual “Off the Pavement” Awards Banquet in Savannah. The event highlighted the outstanding efforts of Game Wardens from across the state who had received a number of awards throughout the year. At the end of the evening, Corporal Eddie Tompkins from the northeast Georgia Region was named as the Division’s 2016 Game Warden of the Year.



**2015 Game Warden of the Year Cpl. Casey Jones pins the one-of-a-kind badge on the 2016 winner, Cpl. Eddie Tompkins.**



**2016 Game Warden of the Year, Cpl. Eddie Tompkins receives his award.**

## **Statewide Awards**

### **Ranger of the Year**

Corporal Eddie Tompkins is one of the best when it comes to boating safety, winning this year's Boating Officer of the Year award. However, his abilities to detect, find, and



apprehend poachers during the fall are quite impressive as well. Eddie has outstanding knowledge of the area, he's a hard worker and has extensive contacts with landowners in his assigned county of Gwinnett. He logged 78 hunting-related complaints and 504 hours spent working wildlife enforcement. During these patrols Cpl. Tompkins issued 76 violator contacts and apprehended an astounding 22 persons for hunting without permission. During the past year Eddie documented 309 total violator contacts. He obtained an astronomical 51 arrest warrants (16 felony and 35 misdemeanor) during the year. While attending to his regular duties, he was also enrolled in the Professional Management

Program (PMP) at Columbus State University. He will be completing the program later this year. Community involvement, outreach, and education are priority to Cpl. Tompkins. During the year he participated in 14 boating safety and education programs and 15 general I&E programs. He worked at the Atlanta Boat Show, the GON Outdoor Blast, and also provided boating safety programs, career day, and endangered species programs in the Gwinnett County School system.

### **James R. Darnell Award**

Ranger First Class John Evans is committed to Conservation Law Enforcement and serving Georgians. RFC Evans had a total of 267 contacts for the year. Ninety percent of these



contacts represent violations on the Region VII focus list. Last year he conducted over 200 WMA and State Park patrols, resulting in 79 violator contacts and four drug cases. This past year, he documented over 540 boating safety hours. This included 92 water patrols in which he checked 432 boats. He made six BUI arrests and logged 18 Search and Rescue missions. He was also involved in 28 JEA patrols documenting 136 JEA hours. John never shuns an opportunity to improve his abilities. He completed training to be a certified NASBLA Instructor. POST General Instructor training, and POST FTO training. He is very involved in his community and is a committee member on

the Golden Isles Longspurs, the Glynn County chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation and is also an assistant coach with the Wayne County 4-H shotgun team. RFC Evans taught 15 programs to school children and the general public promoting Boating Safety and recognizing other hazards unique to the Georgia coast. RFC Evans presented 29 I&Es, Hunter Development programs, and seven Hunter Education classes in 2015.

## **Ranger of the Year Nominees**

Region I- RFC Cody Jones

Region II- Cpl. Eddie Tompkins

Region III- RFC Tim Butler

Region IV- RFC Keith Page

Region V- RFC Jesse Harrison

Region VI- Cpl. Tommy Daughtrey

Region VII- RFC John Evans

## **Supervisor of the Year**

Captain Jeff Swift is the recipient of the 2015 Supervisor of the Year Award. Capt. Swift is a 29-year veteran of the Law Enforcement Division, serving as Region Supervisor since



2007. Jeff has demonstrated the traits and qualities that make him a deserving winner of this prestigious award. He has vigorously supported the goals and values of DNR and, in their written nomination, the Rangers in his Region said that Capt. Swift always creates and maintains a positive and professional work environment. He encourages consistency and accountability throughout the Region, displaying a strong commitment to Conservation Law Enforcement and is dedicated to serving his fellow officers. His coaching, motivation and positive reinforcement help to create a successful and rewarding work environment, benefiting every employee. Jeff continually works to

maintain positive working relationships with many different community organizations within the region, as well as city and county law enforcement agencies, other DNR Divisions, and local legislators. The support of these organizations have proven instrumental pursuing the missions of the Division and the Department. Congratulations to Captain Jeff Swift, the 2015 Supervisor of the Year.

## **Investigative Ranger of the Year**

Corporal Casey Jones, who and is currently the Division's Ranger of the Year, is the 2015 Investigative Ranger of the Year, sponsored by the Safari Club – Georgia Chapter. Cpl.



Jones is a versatile, well-rounded officer and is particularly skilled in investigative work, successfully completing two very in-depth, complex, and time-consuming investigations last year. In one of those cases, he received a hunting without permission complaint in October 2014. He searched the area and located a baited stand, a trail camera, and an ATV trail leading to a suspect's residence. After a thorough investigation, which included collecting evidence from social media sites, interviews of suspects and witnesses, and analyzing data and photos from a trail camera and cell phone, Cpl. Jones determined that the main suspect had committed 43 wildlife violations over the past two

years. The suspect pled guilty in a plea agreement due to Casey's rock-solid case against him. He was fined \$2,300, forfeited all wildlife seized, and lost hunting privileges for three years. For his outstanding efforts in all aspects of Conservation Law Enforcement, Casey was recently named Officer of the Year by the North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association. Congratulations to Corporal Casey Jones, the 2015 Investigative Officer of the Year.

## **Boating Officer of the Year**

Corporal Eddie Tompkins is the 2015 Georgia Boating Officer of the Year. Cpl. Tompkins has exhibited the Division's core mission in all of his boating enforcement duties. Working



primarily on Lake Lanier, Eddie documented 7,285 boating miles, 708 boating hours and responded to 31 Water SARs. He also participated in 14 boating safety educational programs and made eight BUI arrests last year. He made 685 vessel stops logging 242 violations. Eddie also assisted the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office in creating a boat captain course for deputies patrolling the lake. As a member of the DNR Side Scan Sonar Team, Eddie is known for his ability to effectively operate the equipment. In a drowning incident at Stone Mountain Park, Eddie's dedication to bring closure to a grieving family was evident as he searched for the victim until 4:00 a.m., when poor weather halted the operation. He was back on the water at 7 a.m., soon locating the victim with sonar and directing divers for the recovery. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, after receiving information from the drug task force, Cpl. Tompkins arrested three subjects for numerous felony and misdemeanor violations related to the selling of meth on the lake. Illegal drugs, a stolen pistol, and \$4,000 in cash were seized as evidence. In another incident, Eddie observed a pontoon boat that was overloaded and as he approached, he realized the boat was about to sink. He radioed for another Ranger and they were able to save the boaters just as their vessel sank. Congratulations to Corporal Eddie Tompkins, the 2015 Georgia Boating Officer of the Year.

## **The Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award**

Corporal Brian Hobbins is the 2016 Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award recipient. Cpl. Hobbins places a strong emphasis on waterfowl enforcement. He also recognizes the



importance of developing public trust through involvement in his community. Brian had a very impressive waterfowl enforcement season, documenting over 200 hours of enforcement activity, with 60 hours spent dragging ponds in bait detection. He spent 24 evenings in and around flooded timber, listening for after-hours shoots. He conducted six early goose and teal patrols and also worked several evenings outside his work unit, assisting fellow Rangers. His dedication yielded a very impressive 69 waterfowl contacts. Brian is always willing to help in other work units, as his experience and expertise in waterfowl enforcement is well-known across the Region. Much of his waterfowl enforcement efforts occurred prior to waterfowl season, during deer season patrols, when he detected evidence that led to documented violations. In his community in Columbia County, Brian has invested countless hours educating civic groups, students at the local schools, and faith-based organizations on waterfowl habitats and conservation. He is an Advisory Council Member for the Wounded Warrior Retreat at Come-Away Plantation, facilitating hunts to honor and empower combat injured service members.. Congratulations to Corporal Brian Hobbins, winner of 2016 Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award.

## **The Torch Award**

Ranger First Class Patrick Gibbs is the recipient of the 2016 Torch Award. RFC Gibbs, who is assigned to Long County, had an outstanding year in Conservation Law Enforcement. Patrick checked 266 hunting licenses, 356 fishing licenses, 313 vessels, and 67 commercial licenses. He conducted 92 patrols on WMAs and State Parks and logged 190 hours on 45 citizen complaints. He made 50 vessel patrols to include: JEA patrols, shellfish patrols, boating safety patrols, and commercial shrimp trawler patrols, dedicating over 250 hours patrolling state waters. His hunting and fishing enforcement efforts resulted in 170 violator contacts, resulting in the confiscation of two deer, nine ducks, 120 freshwater fish, 12 saltwater fish, over 100 pounds of shrimp, and three bushels of oysters.



Patrick also made 26 cases directly related to night deer hunting, five for hunting turkeys over bait, six BUI arrests, seven for commercial shrimping/oyster violations and seven more cases were made related to waterfowl enforcement. In his assigned work area, which includes 88 miles of the Altamaha River, five WMAs, one State Park, and 22 miles of the Atlantic Coast, Patrick is self-motivated, has a tireless work ethic, and is always sure to leave a positive impression with every citizen contacted. He is also committed to education and conducted 17 I&E programs, working with the local school system, CHAMPS, KFE's, Shop with a COP, and Career Day. Patrick is a CAT Team member and has been selected to be a certified FTO for the Division. Congratulations to Ranger First Class Patrick Gibbs, the 2016 Torch award winner.

## **Hunter Education Instructor of the Year Award**

Ranger Eric White is the 2015 Hunter Education Instructor of the Year for his dedication to promoting Georgia's Hunter Education program. Eric's work unit serves an area of southwest Georgia that typically requires the certification of about 550 students - a challenge for a work unit with three counties without a resident Ranger. In spite of these challenges, Eric understands that a Ranger-taught class enhances the message of personal safety and natural resource protection when it is delivered by a knowledgeable officer in uniform. Eric dedicated approximately 125 hours to Hunter Education, teaching 13 classes in four of the seven counties in his work unit. He continually works to stay knowledgeable on laws and trends in hunter education so he can provide the most informative material to prospective students. Eric was actively involved in the discussions and



planning of the Hunter Education program's recent enhancements and he provided first-hand knowledge of these changes to the instructors in his work unit, ensuring quality and consistency of the program. Eric also participated in 53 various Information & Education presentations promoting firearms, hunting, boating, and ATV safety to numerous groups including the Boy Scouts and local school children. Congratulations to Ranger Eric White, the 2015 Hunter Education Instructor of the Year.

## Previous Rangers of the Year

William Powell	1980	Phillip Scott	1998
W.D. Hill, Jr.	1981	Stanley Elrod	1999
Michael Bone	1982	Rick Sellars	2000
William Vickers	1983	David Ruddell	2001
Dan Parrish	1984	Derek Dillard	2002
Ronald Bailey	1985	Mike Barr	2003
Ralph Sheppard	1986	Harry E. Akins	2004
Roger D. Garrison	1987	Eric Brown	2005
James McDaniel	1988	John Murphy	2006
Doug Lewis	1989	Shane Sartor	2007
Terry West	1990	Mike Binion	2008
W. Howard Hensley, Jr.	1991	Brian Hobbins	2009
Dennis Aderholt	1992	Cindy Miller	2010
Bill Bunch	1993	Timothy Butler	2011
Arvid Edwards	1994	Jason Roberson	2012
Mitchell H. Yeargin	1995	David Webb	2013
Jeff Weaver	1996	Greg Wade	2014
Mike Commander	1997	Casey Jones	2015



## Region I- Calhoun (Northwest)



Front Row, L\_R: RFC Mark Puig, BOG Joyce Holland, Secretary Sherry Rollins, CPT Jeff Galloway, SGT Eric Brown, SGT James Keener, RGR Frank Pucci, RFC Mark Moyer, SGT Jason Roberson, CPL Barton Hendrix, RGR Nolan Callaway, RGR Ryan Locke, CPL Brooks Varnell, K-9 "Taz".

Back Row, L\_R: CPL Chad Cox, SGT Mike Barr, RGR Kalem Burns, RFC Zack Hardy, RFC Daniel Gray, CPL Casey Jones, RFC Roger McConkey, CPL Ben Cunningham, CPL Byron Young, CPL Shawn Elmore, CPL Cody Jones, SGT Brian Keener, RGR Travis Shrader.

### Administration

Currently Region I is comprised of 20 Northwest Georgia Counties and the Metro Atlanta area. Within these counties we have 3 major impoundments, 6 major rivers, 7 State Parks, 18 Wildlife Management Areas (249,000 acres) 173,000 acres of US Forest Service lands, 244 miles of trout streams. The Law Enforcement Division of the Department of Natural Resources continues to assume all Law Enforcement responsibilities on state owned and operated property, including calls from private citizen concerning law enforcement on private and public properties from the 20 counties which comprise the Region.

Region 1 experienced several personnel changes this year. Cpl. Tommy Gentry and Sgt. John Vanlandingham retired in October 2016, Cpl. Lee Burns retired in December 2016. Sgt. Derek Dillard transferred to Region II Gainesville and was replaced with the promotion of Cpl. Jason Roberson to Sergeant in January 2017.

Cpl. James Keener also was promoted to Sergeant in January 2017 to fill vacancy left by retirement of Sgt. Vanlandingham. RFC Cody Jones was promoted to Corporal to fill vacancy left by Sgt. James Keener and RFC Ben Cunningham was promoted to Corporal to fill the vacancy left by retirement of Cpl. Tommy Gentry.

## Region Personnel Awards

Cpl. Cody Jones received the Region 1 Ranger of the Year Award.

Cpl. Bart Hendrix received the Region 1 Boating Safety Officer of the Year and the DNR LED State Boating Safety Officer of the Year.

Cpl. Bart Hendrix was selected as the NASBLA Southern Region Boating Officer of the Year and is qualified for the NASBLA National Boating Officer of the Year.

RFC. Roger McConkey received the Region 1 National Wild Turkey Federation Award.

RFC. Mark Puig received the Region 1 Torch Award.

RFC. Mark Moyer received the Region 1 Investigative Officer of the Year Award.

Region 1 did not submit a nominee for Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award.

Sgt. Brian Keener was honored by the Pickens Co. Kiwanis Club as Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.

In July of 2016, Cpl. Casey Jones attended the (NAWEOA) North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association conference in Burlington Vermont. He was selected as the 2015 NAWEOA “North American Wildlife Officer of the Year.”



RFC Cody Jones was presented with a plaque at the POAG annual convention for being selected as the 2016 Region I “Ranger of the Year.”

In October of 2016, Cpl. Casey Jones gave a presentation on a high profile Ginseng Investigation at the SEAFWA (Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies) conference in Baton Rouge Louisiana.





Game Warden Cpl. Shawn Elmore attended the 45<sup>th</sup> Drug Recognition Expert Class at the Georgia Public Training Center in Forsyth, Georgia where he completed training to become a Drug Recognition Expert. He was awarded the honor of obtaining the highest academic award during the training.

### **Region Office Relocation**

In September 2016, after 55 years of service in the Calhoun Georgia location at One Memory Lane, the Region 1 LE Office was relocated to 781 Red Top Mtn. road in Acworth Ga. A warehouse is currently under construction at the new location.



## **Operational**

Captain Galloway served as OIC at the Command Post set up at Ga. Forestry in Calhoun Ga. During the North Ga. Fires and multiple Region 1 Game Wardens assisted with forest fires in Gordon, Murray, Polk, Haralson, Whitfield, and Bartow Counties in July and November of 2016. Region 1 Game Wardens Galloway, Brown, Burns, Jones, Young, McConkey, Cox and Elmore worked the Hurricane Matthew Detail in October 2016.

Sgt. James Keener, Cpl. Ben Cunningham and RFC Mark Puig assigned to the Counter Terrorism Task Force, assisted with the Operation "Safe State" Fugitive Round Up in Metro Atlanta on 2/01/17.

On Thursday, February 2, 2017, Region 1 Game Wardens, Sgt. Brian Keener, Cpl. Brooks Varnell and Capt. Galloway responded to a two- boat collision in a portion of the Lake known as the "S turns". Upon arriving on scene, it was determined that two boats had collided, one boat had capsized and the other was driving in circles. All three occupants had been thrown into the water and one of them had been rescued by a nearby fisherman. The body of the first victim was located by the Cherokee County Fire Department that day and the search for the other missing man continued until February 19. During this incident, more than twenty Game Wardens searched for the second victim utilizing the DNR Side Scan, Sector Scan, ROV, as well as body drags. Shore sweeps were made each day by both DNR LED as well as Cherokee County Fire. All search efforts were without success until the body surfaced on February 19. Game Wardens assisted in the recovery at that time. The DNR CIRT Team investigated the incident and was able to determine the cause of the incident using on board GPS from each boat. This incident consumed the vast majority of the 10-8 time for several officers during February.

On Tuesday, March 7, 2017 Sgt. Jason Roberson received information that someone had been excavating for American Indian artifacts illegally in the area of the Leake Indian Mounds near Cartersville. On Wednesday, March 8, 2017 Sgt. Roberson and RFC Barton Hendrix searched the area and located the illegal dig site. On Friday, March 10, 2017 SGT Roberson and RFC Zack Hardy attempted to install a camera on the site. As they approached the area, they observed two men digging in the site as well as two piles of debris that were later identified as American Indian Artifacts. They approached the individuals and frisked them for weapons. A small amount of marijuana and a pipe was located. A short time later, another man approached their location and began to act in a suspicious manner. He was found to be in possession of marijuana that was packaged in the exact manner as the other subject. He also had a mason jar full of marijuana. Further investigation revealed that he was delivering the marijuana for sale to the other suspects. A subsequent search of his vehicle by the Bartow Drug Task Force revealed more than five ounces of marijuana, numerous baggies, digital scales and other items related to the sale of narcotics. He was charged with Felony intent to distribute marijuana. Search warrants were obtained for his cell phone as well as the main culprit in the Archeological dig. The search of the artifact diggers phone revealed child pornography. The Drug Task Force and the GBI opened an investigation and subsequently charged him with charges related to child pornography.

More than 850 Native American artifacts and five ounces of marijuana were seized in this case as well as one vehicle. All the misdemeanor charges have been plead guilty to and the felonies are expected to go to trial in the coming year.



During the fall of 2016, RFC Bart Hendrix finished up an investigation that spanned over two deer seasons. The investigation consisted of multiple violators, locations, and charges. It involved a group of hunters who conspired to poach deer throughout Metro Atlanta and a deer cooler who was covering for them. As a result of this investigation, more than 120 charges were made. Five individuals were identified to be the most egregious violators. Sixty- nine warrants were taken out for them including several counts of each of the following: Hunting without permission, hunting big game over bait, taking over the limit, Failure to record harvest, Obstruction, Hunting out of season, and Failure to maintain proper records for a cold storage facility. One of the deer that was determined to have been taken illegally was a 172- inch buck that was rumored to have been killed in Cherokee County but was determined to have been killed in Cobb County after the poacher had obtained his limit of bucks. This poached deer has been featured in several outdoor magazines and the poacher has received quite a bit of notoriety for his trophy.



In January, 2017 Chief K-9 Instructor Cpl. Brooks Varnell purchased 4 new K-9 for the Law Enforcement Division, K-9 Rock was retired in January after 11 years of service. In February, Cpl. Brooks Varnell instructed a 12-week K-9 training academy certifying the handlers and new K-9 successfully. Cpl. Varnell and new K-9 Taz are now working in the field. K-9 Taz is trained in man tracking, evidence recovery, wildlife detection and apprehension.

Cpl. Chad Cox and RFC Daniel Gray organized the annual Polk County Kids Fishing Rodeo. There were 577 kids under age 16 in attendance at this year's event.



During the week of June 12<sup>th</sup> through June 16<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Eric Brown conducted his 12<sup>th</sup> annual Carroll County Outdoor Day Camp. The camp included 41 boys and girls between the ages of 13 and 16. During the week students were certified in Hunter Education and Boat Georgia. Activities included learning to shoot .22 rifles, skeet, and trap. Other activities included shooting archery, crossbows, learning to use a GPS, wildlife identification, plant identification, a live snake show, boat operation and a fishing trip.



Game Warden Cpl. Ben Cunningham received multiple complaints of persons catching and keeping over their limit of fish at the Lock and Dam Park on the Coosa River in Floyd County. On February 22, 2017, Cpl. Cunningham received an anonymous call that persons driving a silver van were at the Lock and Dam Park and catching and keeping too many fish. Cpl. Cunningham responded and found a man from Gwinnett County with fish and coolers in his silver van with aerators. He gave consent for Cpl. Cunningham to look in the coolers. Cpl. Cunningham knew the individual as he had been cited before for over the limit of fish. Cpl. Cunningham found 20 white bass and 40 crappie. The man was arrested and transported to the Floyd County Jail.



## Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)



**Front Row L-R: Capt. Johnny Johnson, Cpl. Kevin Dyer, RFC Chad Chambers, Cpl. Adam Loudermilk, RFC Kevin Goss, RFC David Webb, Rgr. Beth Gilbert, Rgr. Tommy Crabb, RFC Matt Johnson, Rgr. Chris Kernahan, Secretary Tasha Lamb, AAIH Brenda Tanner, Sgt. Lee Brown**

**Back row, L-R: RFC Tim Vickery, Cpl. Eric Isom, RFC Shane Brown, RFC Mark Stephens, Sgt. Derek Dillard, Sgt. Steve Seitz, RFC Brandon Pierce, RFC Joe Hill, Cpl. Anne Wiley, Sgt. Greg Colson, Cpl. Eric Sanders, Cpl. Eddie Tompkins, Rgr. Chris Hall, RFC Mitchell Crump.**

**Inset, L-R: Sgt. Mike Burgamy, Cpl. Josh Chambers, Cpl. Craig Fulghum, RFC Shane Sartor, PT Secretary McKayla Justus**

The Gainesville Region is comprised of the 19 Northeast Georgia Counties which include several metro areas around Atlanta. Within these counties we have 8 major impoundments, 3 major rivers, 13 Wildlife Management Areas, 220 miles of trout streams, 21 State Park Properties and 288,000 acres of National Forest lands. The impoundments within Region II receive over 20 million visitors annually while the state parks and wildlife management areas receive another 2.5 million annually. The Law Enforcement Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources is responsible for the law enforcement needs on all of the state owned and operated property in addition to any DNR law enforcement calls for service on private or public property from the 19 county areas within the region. This tremendous amount of visitation and use on these properties create a great deal of diverse law enforcement issues that the 30 officers of this region continually address.

## **Boating Activity**

This year has been a very busy one and unfortunately we seen a significant rise in water related fatalities. Drowning and boating related incidents accounted for 23 deaths from July of 2016 through June of 2017.

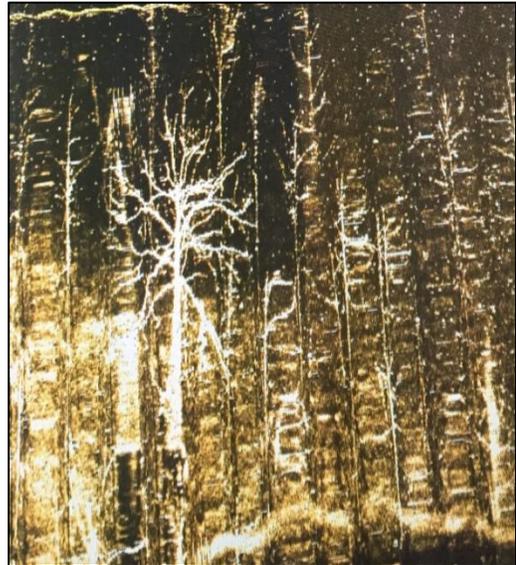
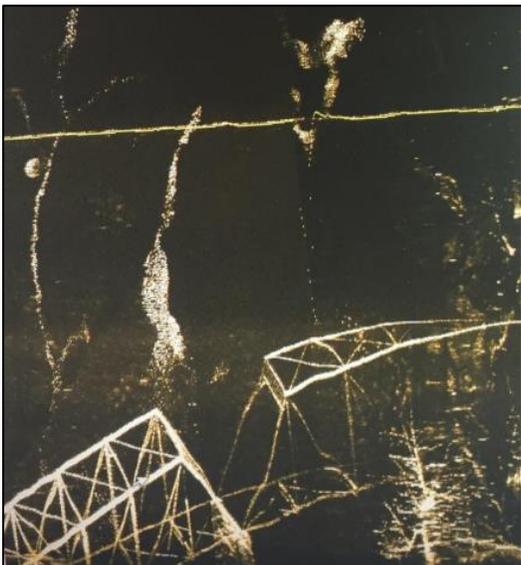
On a Friday evening in July 2016 Game Wardens from Region II responded to one of the most severe boating incidents to ever occur on Lake Lanier. Four people lost their lives in a single vessel boating incident when the operator of a 38-foot tunnel hull Skater lost control of his vessel that was traveling at over 130 miles per hour. The boat flipped several times ejecting all of the occupants who did not survive. Officers from the region worked through the night deploying sonar and remotely operated equipment succeeding in recovering two of the victims. The search continued the next evening and the remaining two occupants were recovered. The DNR LED Critical Incident Reconstruction Team (CIRT) investigated the incident where the speed and other facts in the incident were determined.



The 388 Skater appears to have held together pretty good but extensive damage was done to the starboard and stern of the vessel. The boat was valued between \$800,000 and \$1,000,000 dollars.



Region II LED Game Wardens work very diligently to recover all the victims involved in water deaths and succeeded in 90% of the incidents this past year. Considering what rests beneath the waters of most impoundments this is quite remarkable. The proficiency of these professionals in the use of sonar and remotely operated controlled equipment continues to improve allowing these incidents to conclude quickly.



Another event that Region II LED was involved in was the removal of abandon vessels from Lake Lanier. DNR LED in partnership with the Lake Lanier Association and the US Army Corp of Engineers was successful in securing funds to remove several large boats that were potential hazards for the boating public. Many of these vessels had been left discarded for years and through investigations and cooperation from several sources prior ownership was determined and the vessels were removed. This initiative continues and now derelict docks are also addressed by the US Army Corp of Engineers.



### **Hunting and Fishing Activity**

Game Wardens from Region II were involved in an extensive case in White County where multiple trapping, hunting and felony violations were cited. Two individuals, husband and wife were implicated in various violations involving protected species and other wildlife animals. The husband was a convicted felon and had involved his spouse in his activities to secure a trapping license. An area where several traps were set was located by Game Wardens and surveillance cameras were deployed to capture photographic evidence. The individual was photographed at the traps while in the possession of a firearm. After many months of investigation, a 29-count indictment on the male subject was returned by a grand jury while eight were handed down on the female subject. After a negotiated plea, the male subject was sentenced to a total of 10 years to serve with 3 years being served in confinement. The male subject was fined \$2000.00 and his hunting privileges were suspended for a term of 5 years. The female was sentenced to 2 years on probation and a \$1000.00 fine with 120 hours of community service and her hunting privileges were also suspended for a period of 3 years.



On August 24, 2016 Game Warden Shane Brown, received a compliant of illegal deer hunting on United States Army Corp of Engineers Property. The complainant also stated that the violator had no regard for the law and killed over his limit of deer the previous season. Game Warden Brown scoured the area looking for the violator's truck and located it nearby. Cpl. Eddie Tompkins assisted with locating the subject who was without a firearm. After many lies, the violators hunting location and firearm were discovered. His cell phone provided incriminating evidence of the prior year's hunting season. After questioning, the violator admitted to killing three buck the previous year. Game Wardens seized a 7-point set of antlers for evidence. The US Army Corp of Engineers Ranger issued the violator two federal citations along with the state charges. The subject pled guilty in State Court and was sentenced to a \$1305.00 fine. Federal court disposition has not transpired.



Game Warden Brandon Pierce started an investigation that derived from a complaint on February 27, 2017 and lasted until April 23, 2017, dealing with possible violations from bow fishing. The complaint involved taking gamefish by illegal methods. Upon an initial search for evidence several pieces were found that suggested a valid complaint. Game Warden Shane Sartor assisted in the investigation and the two Wardens gathered enough evidence to interview the suspects. During the initial interviews, Game Warden Pierce and Sartor were able to get statements from the three subjects who admitted to taking gamefish while bow fishing. The violations occurred in three different counties (Stephens, Hart, and Elbert) and two different lakes (Hartwell and Clarkes Hill) during approximately a month period. Over the course of two months, more evidence was gathered and the officers were able to meet with each Counties respective Judge. The investigation was completed and a total of thirty-two citations were issued. They consisted of taking gamefish by illegal methods and possession of illegally taken fish. Thirty-one gamefish were proven to have been killed during the investigation including an 8 and 10 pound largemouth bass along with a 23 pound striper.

### Other Activity

DNR received a substantial sum of money resulting from an illegal ginseng case. The seizure of 430 lbs. of ginseng from a dealer in the investigation sold at an auction earlier this year. The proceeds from the case named Operation Botanical were split between Georgia and North Carolina for ginseng conservation. \$144,000.00 was received and split between the Law Enforcement Division and the Wildlife Resources Division. The Law Enforcement Division will utilize the funds for equipment specifically to support and strengthen the Divisions efforts in the illegal ginseng trade.



Region II LED responded to the wildfires in North Georgia that burnt over 20,000 acres in the Chattahoochee National Forest. LED Game Wardens assisted the US Forest Service, Georgia Forestry Commission, and Local agencies with patrolling the affected areas. Officers evacuated citizens in remote campgrounds on the USFS property and WMA's and provided other law enforcement support in Union, Towns, and White Counties.



## **Equipment**

Region II LED received two new patrol boats this year. Both vessels are center console Cobia's equipped with the latest in electronics and public safety equipment. One boat is assigned to Lake Lanier while the other is assigned to Lake Hartwell. Maintaining a modern vessel fleet on the states waterways is a very important factor in the Law Enforcement Divisions response of water emergencies.



## **Region II Personnel Awards**

Cpl. Eddie Tompkins received the State Game Warden of the Year Award  
Cpl. Craig Fulghum received the Region II Boating Safety Officer of the Year Award  
Sgt. Jason Roberson received the Region II Investigative Ranger of the Year Award  
Game Warden Chris Kernahan received the Region II & State Torch Award  
Game Warden Chris Kernahan received the John Jacobs Award presented by the Hall County Kiwanis Club

## **Promotions and Personnel Changes**

Sergeant Stan Elrod was promoted to Captain within LED Region III  
Sergeant Derek Dillard transferred from Region I to Region II  
Cpl. Jason Roberson was promoted to Sergeant within LED Region I  
Game Warden Eric Isom was promoted to Corporal  
Game Warden Shane Brown transferred from Forsyth County to Dawson County  
Game Warden Tommy Crab transferred from the Parks Division to the LED assigned to Lake Burton/Rabun Boating Safety. He also graduated the 31<sup>st</sup> Game Warden Academy  
Chris Hall came to work for DNR LED and assigned as Game Warden in Forsyth County. He graduated the 31<sup>st</sup> Game Warden Academy.

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



**Front Row, L-R: Part-time Secretary Kelly Hadden, AA3 Elizabeth Bentley, Captain Stan Elrod, Cpl. Derrell Worth, RFC Grant Matherly, Sgt. Max Boswell, Sgt. Doyte Chaffin, RFC Ricky Boles, Cpl. Ryan Swain, Cpl. Brian Adams, Sgt. Matt Garthright, Cpl. Ben Payne**

**Back Row, L-R: Ranger Michael Madden, Ranger Jason Harrison, RFC Richard Tanner, RFC Bobby Timmerman, Cpl. Julian Wilkins, RFC Tim Butler, Cpl. Mark Patterson, RFC Micheal Crawley, RFC Phillip Nelson, Ranger Dan Schay, Cpl. Jeff Billips**  
**Not pictured: Cpl. David Allen, K9 Storm**

### **Personnel Changes**

Region III underwent several personnel changes this past fiscal year. Cpl. Brian Hobbins was promoted to Sgt. and transferred to Region VI. Cpl. Brian Adams transferred within Region III from Washington and Johnson Counties to McDuffie and Taliaferro Counties. Sgt. Matt Garthright transferred from Administrative Sgt. Of Region III to Lake Oconee Section Field Sgt. Sgt. John Harwell transferred from Lake Oconee Section Field Sgt. To Administrative Sgt. Of Region III. Capt. Mark Padgett retired from DNR Law Enforcement. Region III welcomed Sgt. Stan Elrod, from Region II, as the new Capt. RFC Jeff Billips was promoted to Cpl. in Burke County.

### **Region Personnel Awards**

Cpl. Brian Adams received the Region Game Warden of the Year Award  
RGR Dan Schay received the Region Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award.  
Cpl. Mark Patterson received the Region Investigative Warden of the Year Award.  
Cpl. Ben Payne received the State NWTF Officer of the Year Award.

## Conservation Law Enforcement

Region III had an outstanding year in the area of Conservation Law Enforcement. Rangers put forth great effort and celebrated many accomplishments that warrant special recognition. The enforcements efforts mentioned in the following cases show a willingness to go above and beyond, dedication beyond measure and commitment to catch the violators responsible.

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, Corporal Patterson, along with RFC Tim Butler, responded to a complaint in Elbert County. There they met with the complainant, who relayed to the Wardens that he had trapped a number of feral hogs on his property and had been using the trap as a pen for the purpose of feeding out nine of the smaller hogs for butchering at a later date. He stated he arrived to his property on the 10th to find the trap empty. Upon his inspection, he found blood inside and outside of the trap. He stated he believed the neighbors on the adjoining tract of land were responsible for killing and taking his hogs. Cpl. Patterson examined the pen and found indications that the animals had been killed inside the pen and dragged out of the only opening, which was a sliding door. He noted drag marks and blood evidence, which originated at the pen and led to an adjoining property line approximately 80 yards away where tracks and blood evidence indicated the animals had been loaded on an ATV of some type. The ATV trail continued through the adjoining tract of land with additional blood evidence found as drops and transfer or smears along the way. After a thorough investigation, Cpl. Patterson was able to locate the individuals whom were responsible for taking the hogs. Warrants were obtained, and the individuals were charge with one count each for Hunting Without Permission, one count each for Theft by Taking (misdemeanor), and two counts each for Criminal Trespass.

Game Wardens on Lake Oconee continue to encounter individuals fishing by illegal methods. Several groups have been located across the lake, using cast nets and gill nets to take game fish.

On January 25, 2017, Game Wardens from the across Region 3 executed a search warrant in McDuffie County. In November, the Game Wardens began investigating a complaint of killing over the limit of antlered deer during the 2016-2017 deer season. During the investigation, it was also determined that the suspect was a convicted felon and as such is prohibited from possessing firearms. During the execution of the search warrant, a large amount of marijuana with an estimated street value of \$292,000 dollars was discovered. Hidden with the illegal drugs were numerous hunting rifles, shotguns, hand guns and assault rifles.





On May 26th Region III Department of Natural Resources Game Wardens, assisted by Warren County Sheriff's Office and ATF, executed arrest and search warrants in Warren County. The warrants stemmed from a month-long investigation of hunting alligators out of season. Seven suspects were arrested on numerous misdemeanor and felony charges. Subsequently, substantial amounts of methamphetamine and marijuana along with over \$25,000.00 in cash was seized. Other seizure items include firearms, vehicles, ATV's and explosive devices.

Cpl. Billips investigated two turkey poaching cases that involved social media. The first case began when a land owner complained that four jakes were killed without permission on his property. The land owner presented a picture of a suspect posing with a jake on his property that was posted on a social media site. The land owner said the other suspect was a supposed friend who had betrayed him. Cpl. Billips found the incident location and collected evidence from the scene. Cpl. Billips interviewed the suspect in the picture. The suspect was a resident of South Carolina and was issued citations for non-resident hunting without license, non-resident hunting big game without license, hunting without permission, and recording / reporting requirements for game birds. The other suspect was arrested for hunting without permission and three counts of recording / reporting requirements for game birds.



Cpl. Billips' second case began with a complaint from a landowner and an anonymous tip to the Ranger Hotline. The complaints were about a suspect killing over the limit of wild turkeys and hunting without permission. Cpl. Billips spoke with a landowner who provided pictures the suspect posted to social media. RFC Bobby Timmerman received the anonymous tip and spoke to the complainant who provided the same and additional pictures the suspect posted to social media. Cpl. Billips patrolled the complainant's property and RFC Timmerman obtained search warrants for the suspect's social media accounts. Cpl. Billips and RFC Timmerman enlisted the IT skills of RFC Richard Tanner to interpret the data from the suspect's social media accounts. RFC Tanner was able to reveal each distinct gobbler the suspect posted and the GPS location of each kill. Cpl. Billips interviewed several witnesses and apprehended the suspect turkey hunting without permission on the landowner's property. The Game Wardens' collaborative effort resulted in the arrest of the suspect and his brother for hunting without permission (3 counts), recording/reporting requirements for game birds (4 counts), taking over the season bag limit (4 counts), hunting after obtaining bag limit (5 counts), making false statements to obtain license, and hunting without hunters safety certification.



### **Spartan Cameras**

Over the past year, Region III (east central) has used 11 Spartan Cameras to apprehend fish and wildlife law violators in excess of 120 violations. The violations include fishing without permission, hunting without permission, illegal trapping, hunting big game over bait, and fishing with illegal baskets. A photo of a violator illegally hunting alligator out of season resulted in an arrest involving methamphetamine, marijuana, 15 stolen firearms, a dozen vehicles and the seizure of \$26,000 in cash.

### **Cpl. Worth Shooting**

On April 1, Cpl. Derrell Worth and Sgt. Matt Garthright were checking a turkey hunter who was hunting over bait. While Cpl. Worth was speaking with the hunter, another hunter shot at what he thought was a turkey, striking both Cpl. Worth and the other hunter. The shooter was detained, and both Cpl. Worth and the other victim were transported to a nearby hospital for evaluation. Fortunately, the injuries sustained were not life threatening.

## Region IV- Macon (West Central)



Front Row L-R: K-9 Drake, RFC Keith Page, Sgt. Brent Railey, Sgt. Tim Kendrick, Sgt. Tony Fox, Sgt. Wanda Roberts, Captain Bob Lynn, Sgt. Jim Bradfield, Sgt. Bo Kelly, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen, K-9 Ruger  
Middle Row L-R: RFC Niki Spencer, Cpl. Keith Waddell, Cpl. Tony Wynne, RFC Kevin Godbee, RFC Russell Epps, RFC Ronnie Beard, Cpl. Mitch Oliver, RFC Jeremy Reese, Chaplain Brandon Brooks  
Back Row L-R: Cpl. Travis Sweat, Cpl. Josh Swain, Ranger Matt Johnson, RFC David Fisher, Cpl. Robert Stillwell, RFC Freddie Hays, Cpl. Lynn Stanford  
Not pictured: Cpl. Wil Smith, Chaplain Rick Lanford, Chaplain Chaplain Marc Crandlemire, Chaplain Joel Vinson  
Inset: BOG Stephannie Stinson, Part-time Secretary Jami Tripp

### Sergeant Bradfield's Work Unit



Sergeant Jim Bradfield's section consists of Harris, Muscogee, Talbot, Taylor, Crawford, Bibb, and Peach Counties. The Game Wardens in this work unit patrol Lake Harding, Lake Oliver, Goat Rock, and Lake Tobesofkee, along with several miles of the Chattahoochee, Ocmulgee, and Flint Rivers. Several state owned properties are also located within the work section including seven Wildlife Management Areas, one Public Fishing Area, and one State Park. Game Wardens assigned to this work unit are Cpl. Mitch Oliver, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen and K-9 Ruger, Cpl. Josh Swain, RFC David Fisher, and Ranger Ethan Franklin.



Corporal Jeremy Bolen, along with his K-9 partner Ruger, was called on throughout the past year to participate in many details. Whether it was working a hunting complaint and utilizing Ruger to search for evidence or performing a K-9 demonstration at a local school, the pair logged many hours together in the field.

Cpl. Bolen was also called on numerous times this past year to perform as a member of the departments honor guard. Cpl. Bolen is also a firearms instructor and assisted with region firearms qualifications as well as the recently graduated Advanced Game Warden Academy.

Cpl. Bolen had several quality cases this past year involving illegal hunting and fishing. In July of 2016, Cpl. Bolen checked a local reservoir in Talbot County and found a fisherman to be over the daily creel limit of Crappie. Cpl. Bolen confiscated the fish and issued a citation for the violation.



Cpl. Bolen, with the assistance of Corporal Mitch Oliver and Sergeant Jim Bradfield, worked an ongoing investigation in November of 2016 involving a convicted felon hunting with a firearm. Cpl. Bolen had received information that the hunter was hunting property in close proximity to his house and was being dropped off by his wife. Cpl. Bolen located three deer at a local deer processor that the hunter had killed and the deer had been recorded on the hunter's license as being killed with a firearm. The hunter became aware that the Game Wardens were in the area searching for him and walked to a friend's house to make it appear that he was there doing yardwork. Cpl. Bolen interviewed the hunter, which eventually resulted in the subject admitting that he had been hunting that morning. The subject also told the officers where they could locate his firearm, which was in the backyard of the residence covered with leaves. The hunter was subsequently arrested for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and hunting deer without wearing fluorescent orange.



In March of 2017, Cpl. Bolen received a complaint of someone killing multiple deer at night in Talbot County. The investigation gained traction in April when the complainant called back and provided three names that may have been involved in the incident. Cpl. Bolen and Cpl. Oliver went to one of the suspect's residence and learned that he, along with one of the other suspects, was fishing on neighboring property. The Game Wardens proceeded to locate the fishermen and after interviewing the 2 subjects, had full confessions and the correct name of the 3<sup>rd</sup> suspect. The officers later interviewed the 3<sup>rd</sup> subject at his residence and received a confession as well. All three men were charged with hunting deer at night and were issued written warnings for the other violations for their cooperation.

Corporal Josh Swain is one of the region sonar operators and attended a weeklong sonar training session this past year. With his vast knowledge of the sonar equipment and computers, Cpl. Swain was tasked with installing the new sonar software on all the states sonar computers. Cpl. Swain travelled out of the section several times to assist other regions with searching for drowning victims.



Corporal Mitch Oliver is a defensive tactics instructor and spent several weeks at the state training center in Forsyth recertifying and teaching at the Advanced Game Warden Academy. Cpl. Oliver completed the department's FTO certification training earlier this year along with other Game Wardens from around the state. Cpl. Oliver also traveled to Florida this past January where he served as an Instructor at the National Hunting Incident Investigation Academy.

During the past deer season, Cpl. Oliver worked numerous complaints in Harris and Taylor Counties. One incident in Taylor County involved a deputy catching a subject returning to get a deer he had killed from the road earlier in the evening. Cpl. Oliver was called and asked to come to the county jail to charge the subject. Cpl. Oliver questioned the suspect when he arrived and learned that there was another subject in the vehicle when the deer was killed. The second suspect was contacted and asked to meet the officer at the jail. After interviewing the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject, both individuals were charged with hunting from a public road and hunting from a motor vehicle.

In another case that Cpl. Oliver investigated in Taylor County, both the subjects from the above-mentioned case were suspects again. On November 15<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. Oliver learned that the 2 subjects had killed 3 deer on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> and took them to a local deer cooler. Cpl. Oliver searched the license database and learned that only one of the suspects had a valid hunting license and it was purchased on November 5<sup>th</sup>. The records also showed that the deer were recorded by the hunter on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, prior to the hunter purchasing his license. Cpl. Oliver located the subjects and conducted interviews. Both subjects admitted to killing the deer and admitted to not having valid hunting license at the time. Both men were charged with hunting without a license and hunting without a big game license.

### **Sergeant Railey's Work Unit**



Sgt. Brent Railey's work unit consists of Heard, Troup, Coweta, Meriwether, Fayette, Clayton, Henry, Spalding, and Pike Counties. Game Wardens in this unit patrol West Point Lake and several miles of the Chattahoochee River. Sgt. Railey's work unit also patrols several thousand acres of Wildlife Management areas.

This year, Sgt. Railey and his staff were very fortunate to receive a new boathouse on West Point Lake. This was a much-needed addition to this work unit and allows for secure storage of all DNR Law Enforcement vessels and equipment and also allows for a faster response to emergencies on the lake. Game Wardens assigned to this work unit are Cpl. Keith Waddel, Cpl. Travis Sweat, RFC Kevin Godbee, RFC Russell Epps, and Ranger Charles Follin.



In May of 2017 Cpl. Keith Waddell found two subjects using illegal turtle baskets in the Flint River. Cpl. Waddell confiscated more than 50 illegal turtle baskets and several dozen turtles taken illegally.



In May of 2017, Cpl. Keith Waddell and Sgt. Brent Railey investigated a person suspected of possessing Gabon Vipers at his residence. These reptiles are illegal to possess in Georgia without a permit and are one of the most venomous snakes in the world. Game Wardens, along with the assistance of a reptile expert, confiscated the snakes. Charges are pending the completion of the investigation.



In the summer and fall of 2016, RFC Kevin Godbee investigated a group of people who were posting illegal activity on social media. The illegal activity included illegal trapping, hunting out of season, hunting from a public roadway, hunting from a motor vehicle and other illegal activities. This case involved multiple people in multiple locations over an extended period of time. RFC Godbee determined was able to later identify the subjects and secured search warrants for their residence and computers. The investigation is ongoing and charges are pending completion of the investigation.

Cpl. Travis Sweat and Sgt. Brent Railey instructed a basic DNR laws and response course at the annual “Man Tracker” training conference sponsored by the Coweta County Sheriff’s Office. The course was designed to educate police officers, deputy sheriffs, and others in the law enforcement community about how to respond to common DNR type calls they will receive through 911 systems. It also educated them on how the game and fish laws are written and how they can assist at a scene until a DNR LED Game Warden can arrive.

### **Sergeant Fox’s Work Unit**



Sgt. Tony Fox’s work unit consists of Butts, Jasper, Lamar, Monroe, and Upson Counties. In this work unit, Game Wardens patrol Lake Jackson, Lake Julliette, High Falls Lake, Indian Springs Lake, and several miles of the Ocmulgee and Flint Rivers. Additionally, this unit also patrols several thousand acres of Wildlife Management areas and two large State Parks.

During this year, Sgt. Fox’s unit received a new patrol boat that is assigned to Game Warden Jessica Spencer and will be used on Lake Jackson for Boating Safety patrols as well as Search and Rescue calls. Also, this work unit received a new boat house which replaced an aging existing facility that was donated to DNR many years ago by Georgia Power. Assigned to this work unit are Game Wardens Cpl. Tony Wynne, Cpl. Will Smith, RFC Keith Page and K-9 Rio, RFC Jessica Spencer, RFC Freddie Hays, RFC Jeremy Reese, and Ranger Ken Lalumiere.



In October 2016, RFC Jeremy Reese transferred from Sgt. Kelly's work unit (Jones County) to Sgt. Fox's work unit. He is now assigned to Charlie Elliott/Jackson Lake. In November, Ken Lalumiere transferred from the Parks and Historic Sites Division to the Law Enforcement Division; he is assigned to Indian Springs State Park / Butts County.

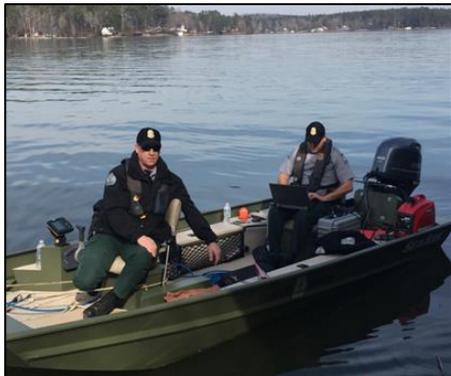
In November 2016, RFC Jessica Spencer completed the NASBLA Advanced Boat Accident Investigations course held in Havana, Florida. RFC Jeremy Reese completed the Hunting Incident Investigations Academy, also held in Havana, Florida in January 2017. Cpl. Will Smith completed the first two blocks of instruction of the Professional Management Program offered at Columbus State University.



Game Warden Page and Retired K-9 Drake

This past spring Region IV welcomed its newest K-9 member, "Rio", after the well-deserved retirement of RFC Keith Page's veteran partner, K-9 "Drake". K-9 Drake served Region IV and the Law Enforcement Division from August 2006 until his retirement in January of 2017. Rio and Page completed the intensive 12-week K-9 training course held at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in June.

Game Warden Page and K-9 Rio working hard during the 12-week training course for DNR K-9s



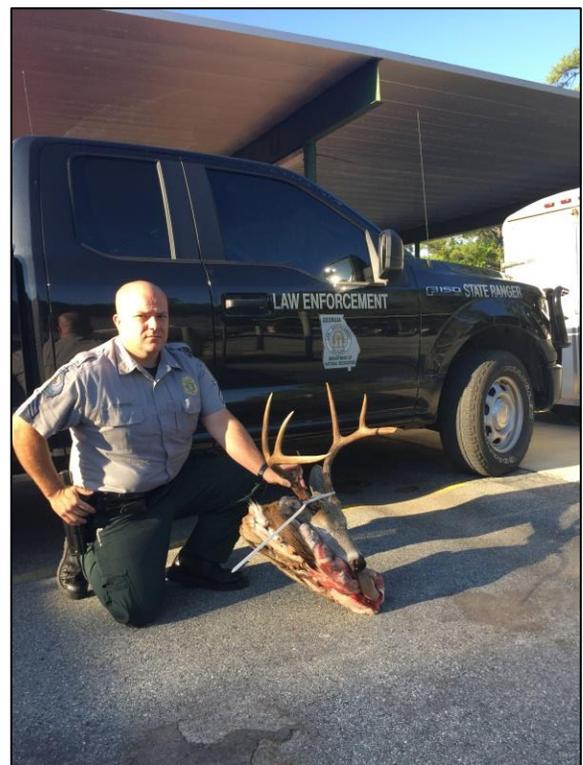
This past year Game Wardens from Sgt. Fox's work unit responded to 21 Search and Rescue events, primarily on and around the Ocmulgee and Flint Rivers, involving the recovery of 54 individuals. Wardens traveled 4,400 miles and expended 465 hours during these operations. Additionally, wardens investigated two fatal hunting incidents, one fatal boating incident, and four drownings, one of which occurred on High Falls State Park.

### Sergeant Kelly's Work Unit



Sgt. Bo Kelly's work unit consists of Putnam, Jones, Baldwin, Wilkinson, Twiggs, Houston, Bleckley, and Pulaski Counties. Game Wardens in this work unit are responsible for boating safety on Lake Sinclair as well as many miles of the Oconee and Ocmulgee Rivers. This work unit is also responsible for thousands of acres of Wildlife Management areas and two Public Fishing areas as well. Assigned to this work unit are Game Wardens Cpl. Lynn Stanford, Cpl. Robert Stillwell, RFC Ronnie Beard, Ranger Stephen Payne, and Ranger Jonathan Segars.

In the fall of 2016, Cpl. Lynn Stanford and RFC Jeremy Reese began an investigation that started from a picture posted on a social media site. The picture posted was from a location known to Game Wardens and was posted by an individual that officers had received complaints on for hunting without permission. Due to persistence and good investigative work, the Game Wardens were able to discover many other violations and decided to interview the subject about the incident. Upon completion of the investigation, it was determined and confirmed that the subject was hunting over bait, hunting without permission, and several other game violations were noted as well. During the course of the investigation, Game Wardens also learned that the subject had killed a buck inside of a high fence enclosure without permission in another County. After following up on this information, it was also discovered that the subject had been stealing property from the owner of the high fence property as well.



In late 2016, four Asian men were arrested for hunting deer at night on the Morgan/Putnam County line by RFC Rickey Boles and Sgt. Bo Kelly. Game Wardens were working the area and setup to detect night deer hunting activity in the area. The suspects were apprehended after they shot at a deer in a field that Game Wardens were sitting on.



Game Wardens worked two boating incidents on Lake Sinclair that involved boats striking the shoreline and/or docks. Upon completion of the investigation of both incidents, both operators were found to be intoxicated and were arrested. In both incidents, the boats and docks were heavily damaged.



Work section Game Wardens also worked three drownings on Lake Sinclair during this period. Two of the incidents involved swimmers while the third was a fisherman who fell from his boat while out on the lake fishing.



While there were tragedies to note on the lake this summer, Game Wardens, with the help of Georgia Power, were able to spread the word about the importance of wearing your life jackets while on the water. Below, Cpl. Robert Stillwell awards to young boaters who got caught wearing their life jackets.

Sgt. Bo Kelly and Cpl. Lynn Stanford completed DRE (Drug Recognition Expert) training in Forsyth. This training will allow both Game Wardens to be more proficient at checking hunters and boaters for drug impairment. DNR LED only has three Game Wardens certified through this program. Both Game Wardens also assisted with delivering new training across the state to all Game Wardens on new Seated Battery Field Sobriety Tests.

RFC Ronnie Beard, pictured below, volunteered for and was selected to become a member of the Governor's Task Force (GTF) which is a statewide effort to seek out and eradicate marijuana grows. This detachment is for five months out of the year.





Cpl. Robert Stillwell and Sgt. Bo Kelly apprehended a group of duck hunters in Pulaski County who were hunting waterfowl over a baited area. The small pond was baited with whole kernel corn. Citations were issued to all hunters and the ducks were confiscated. The ducks were donated to a needy family.

During a firearms deer hunt on Oaky Woods WMA, Cpl. Robert Stillwell located a deer stand baited with corn. Cpl. Stillwell installed a trail camera in the area and was later notified by the camera that a hunter was approaching the baited area. Cpl. Stillwell then was able to enter the area where the hunter was hunting illegally and cite the hunter for several violations. Below is the picture that alerted Cpl. Stillwell of the approaching hunter.





Section Game Wardens checked numerous hunters during this period, sometimes capturing the hunter's success with a picture. RFC Ronnie Beard posed with a young hunter who had some luck harvesting a deer during this past hunting season.

On February 11<sup>th</sup> Game Wardens Ronnie Beard, Robert Stilwell, Bo Kelly, Josh Swain and Bubba Stanford assisted local volunteers with the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Quail Hunt for Kids. Archery, skeet competition, and quail hunting were available to nineteen kids who recently completed the hunter safety education course.



Sergeant Jim Bradfield and Sergeant Wanda Roberts graduated from Command College and Columbus State University with a Masters of Public Safety Administration. Additionally, Cpl. Lynn Stanford and Cpl. Jeremy Bolen also completed the Professional Management Program at Columbus State University.

Game Wardens Charlie Follin, Stephen Payne, Ethan Franklin, and Ken Lalumiere completed the Advanced Game Warden Academy and have begun field training. Game Warden Follin is assigned to Coweta and Fayette Counties, Game Warden Stephen Payne is assigned to Jones County, Game Warden Ethan Franklin is assigned to FDR State Park, and Game Warden Ken Lalumiere is assigned to Indian Springs State Park and Butts County.



Stephen Payne



Ethan Franklin



Ken Lalumiere



Charles Follin

## Region V- Albany (Southwest)



L-R: Capt. Rick Sellars, Sgt. Ellis Wynn, Cpl. Jesse Harrison, AOC Cindy Hynote, Cpl. Clint Martin, Sgt. Al Greer, Cpl. Tony Cox, Ranger David Jones, RFC Jon Penuel, RFC Quinn Fogle, RFC Steve Thomas, Cpl. Scott Carroll, Sgt. Bob Holley, Cpl. Steve Robinson, RFC Eric White, Sgt. Jim Atchley  
Kneeling: Cpl. Greg Wade, K-9 Trigg  
Not pictured: Sgt. David Ruddell, Secretary Shannon Boyd

The Region V Law Enforcement Division is comprised of twenty-nine counties in the southwest portion of the state with the headquarters located in Albany. Within the region, there are five large reservoirs, two major rivers, three smaller rivers, thirteen wildlife management areas, seven state parks, Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, and Ft. Benning Military Base.

Currently, the region has seventeen POST certified game wardens assigned to its ranks with fifteen primarily assigned field responsibilities and Captain Rick Sellars and Sergeant Ellis Wynn assigned administrative responsibilities. The region also has two non-sworn administrative staff, Cindy Hynote the Administrative Assistant III, and Shannon Boyd the hourly secretary.

Sergeant Ellis Wynn, AOC Cindy Hynote, Captain Rick Sellars



**The region's twenty-nine counties are divided into four work units; each supervised by a sergeant.**

Sergeant Al Greer and his staff, Corporal Clint Martin and Corporal Jesse Harrison. Sergeant Greer's work unit covers Marion, Macon, Schley, Dooly, Sumter, Crisp, Lee and Turner counties. Key points of interest are Georgia Veterans State Park, Lake Blackshear, Flint River WMA, Montezuma Bluffs Natural Area, Cordele Fish Hatchery and Fall Line WMA.



Corporal Jesse Harrison, Sergeant Al Greer, Corporal Clint Martin

Sergeant David Ruddell and his staff, Corporal Robbie Griner, Corporal Greg Wade, RFC Jon Penuel and RFC Eric White. Sergeant Ruddell's work unit covers Dougherty, Worth, Tift, Colquitt, Thomas and Brooks counties. Key points of interest are Lake Worth, Doerun Picture Plant Bog Natural Area, River Creek WMA, Chickasawhatchee WMA, DOT Mitigation sites and Albany Nursery WMA.

Corporal Greg Wade and K-9 Trigg, RFC Jon Penuel, RFC Eric White



Sergeant Bob Holley and his staff, Corporal Tony Cox, Game Warden First Class Steve Thomas and Ranger David Jones. Sergeant Holley's work unit covers Grady, Decatur, Seminole, Miller, Early, Mitchell, and

Baker Counties. Key points of interest include Lake Seminole, Seminole State Park, Kolomoki Mounds State Park, Chickasawhatchee WMA, Silver Lake WMA, Lake Seminole WMA and Elmodel WMA.



Ranger David Jones, Corporal Tony Cox, RFC Steve Thomas, Sergeant Bob Holley

Sergeant Jim Atchley and his staff, Corporal Scott Carroll, Corporal Steve Robinson and RFC Quinn Fogle. Sergeant Atchley's work unit covers Chattahoochee, Stewart, Webster, Quitman, Randolph, Terrell, Clay and Calhoun counties. Key points of interest include Chickasawhatchee WMA, Lake Walter F. George, Providence Canyon State Park, Florence Marina State Park, George Bagby State Park, Hannahatchee Creek WMA, Lake George WMA and Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge and Fort Benning Military Base.

RFC Quinn Fogle, Corporal Scott Carroll, Corporal Steve Robinson, Sergeant Jim Atchley



**Region V staff received numerous awards and honors for their work throughout the year.**

RFC Quinn Fogle was the recipient of the Rocky Wainwright State Waterfowl Award.



Captain Rick Sellars presenting RFC Quinn Fogle the waterfowl award.

Sergeant Jim Atchley was selected as Instructor of the Year.

Corporal Tony Cox and RFC Jon Penuel were selected as the regions Investigators of the Year as a result of their statewide investigation into the illegal killing of alligators.

Corporal Jesse Harrison was selected for the 2016 Region 5 Ranger of the Year for his outstanding enforcement activities, and overall commitment to his profession.

RFC Eric White was selected by the Dougherty County District Attorney's Office as their State Officer of the Year.



Dougherty County District Attorney Greg Edwards presents RFC Eric White with the District Attorney's State Officer of the Year Award.

**Region V experienced several personnel changes this year.**

Sergeant Rick Sellars was promoted to region captain following the retirement of Captain Jeff Swift on a medical retirement.

Ranger Jay Lewis left the agency to pursue a career with Sumter County Sheriff's office.

Corporal Robbie Griner suffered a potentially career-ending back injury in 2015 while conducting search and rescue efforts for a missing girl in Baker County, and has been unable to return to duty.

Corporal Bob Holley was promoted to sergeant and assumed duties as the Sergeant Field Supervisor of the Lake Seminole Work.

RFC Jesse Harrison was promoted to corporal in his work unit.

Ranger David Jones joined the region staff and was assigned to Early County. He graduated the 31<sup>st</sup> Advanced Game Warden Academy in June and is currently in the FTO Program with Corporal Tony Cox assigned as his FTO.



Captain Rick Sellars pinning badge on Ranger David Jones during graduation ceremony.

Creek, the region's K-9 was medically retired from service in December 2016 after five years of dedicated service. He passed away due to cancer on June 1, 2017.



### **Passing of retired game wardens**

Sergeant Jack Hardage passed away on December 03, 2016 following failing health. Sergeant Hardage retired from the old Cordele District and will be greatly missed.

### **Region 5 New Equipment**

An older Triton boat was replaced with an Edgewater 220 IS on Lake Seminole.

Corporal Tony Cox with new Edgewater patrol boat assigned to Lake Seminole.



### **Game Wardens in their communities**

Game Wardens continue to be involved in community activities, attending dinners with local groups and participating with various civic functions. This year Corporal Steve Robinson and RFC Quinn Fogle participated in the WC Bradley youth hunt conducted on the Bradley Farms along the Chattahoochee River.



RFC Quinn Fogle assisting a young hunter with her first buck.

Corporal Steve Robinson with youth hunters at the annual WC Bradley Youth Hunt.



Wardens participated in many programs at local schools this year, requests were received for safety programs related to safe jet-ski operation and general water safety prior to children being released for the summer.

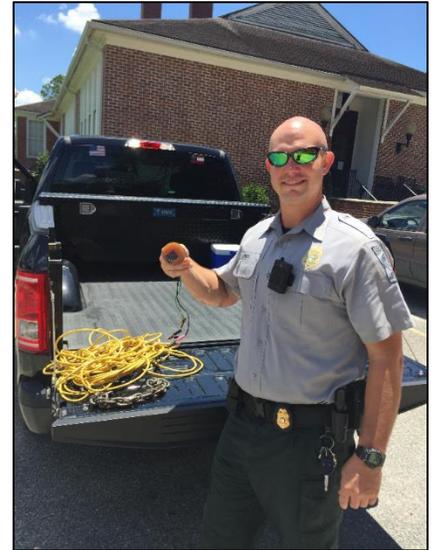


Corporal Jesse Harrison conducting a water safety program at a local school.

Game Wardens continue to conduct investigations into illegal activities, working diligently to address landowner concerns and violations on state operated properties.

On July 13<sup>th</sup>, Ranger David Jones and Corporal Tony Cox cited two individuals for shocking fish in the Flint River in Baker County. The case was the result of a three-month investigation into a complaint that was received via the Division's Facebook page.

Ranger David Jones with his first seized shocking device, confiscated on the Flint River.



RFC Steve Thomas with a confiscated illegal alligator hide.

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, RFC Steve Thomas assisted the Grady County Sheriff's Office in serving a search warrant on a convicted felon suspected of being in possession of multiple illegal firearms. During the search an alligator hide was found in the subject's residence. The hide was not tagged nor did the subject possess any paperwork that would support the legal possession of the hide. Steve interviewed the subject who admitted to possessing the hide and stated that he obtained it from an individual in Florida. The subject was charged with possession of alligator or parts thereof and the hide was confiscated. The subject was also arrested by the Grady County Sheriff's Office for multiple felonies related to the search warrant.



True public support...Nine Toes BBQ delivered plates by boat to the game wardens working Lake George during the July 4th holiday period. Here Corporal Scott Carroll enjoys his meal on the water.

Sergeant David Ruddell, Corporal Greg Wade, RFC Jon Penuel, and RFC Eric White posted five dove fields prior to hunting season as well as located seven in-progress baited dove shoots that resulted in over 50 citations.

Corporal Jesse Harrison collecting bait sample from a dove field.



Duck season for Sergeant Ruddell's group produced four baited duck ponds, four "after hours" roost shoots, and numerous license and bag limit violations. Within the six-county work section, the officers responded to multiple complaints of night deer hunting. Many hours were spent surveilling the most promising spots and resulted in the arrests of seven individuals for hunting deer at night, two of which were convicted felons.

This year also saw an increase in trapping and small game violations. The wardens located several trappers trapping out of season, trapping on the right of ways and trapping without permission, as well as several charges for hunting bobcats and foxes out of season. The wardens also apprehend and charge fourteen individuals for hunting turkeys, deer, and small game without permission, most of which were the result of focusing on complaints. Cpl. Wade also located and surveilled several traps deployed to trap birds of prey.

A hawk caught in a "blind pig" trap baited with a live pigeon. One of several located by Corporal Greg Wade during an investigation into illegal trapping.



Corporal Clint Martin, Sergeant Bob Holley, Corporal Jesse Harrison, and Sgt. Greer arrested fourteen individuals for hunting deer at night during this past hunting season.

On one of these night hunting cases, Corporal Jesse Harrison received a call around 10:30 p.m. in reference to night deer hunting. Following up on the information provided by the complainant, Corporal Harrison was able to gather evidence, locate the subjects, and charge them for hunting deer at night. Corporal Harrison worked on the investigation relentlessly for 12 hours after receiving the complaint before it was brought to a close.

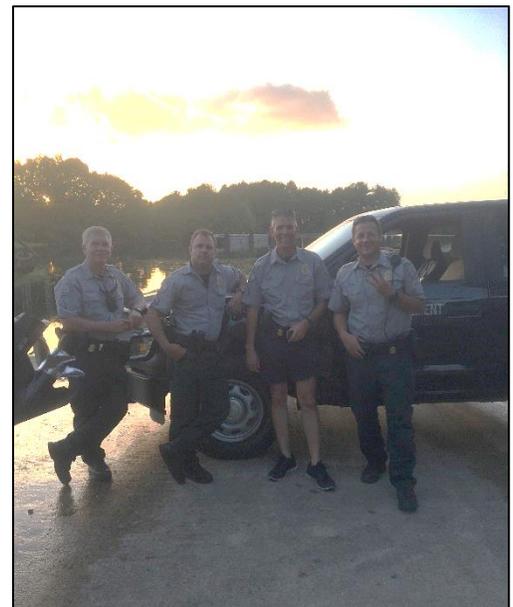
On another night deer hunting investigation game wardens received information about several subjects shooting deer at night. After an eight day investigation the wardens charged four subjects for hunting deer at night in Sumter and Schley Counties.

As the use of kayaks and wake board boats continue to increase, wardens have fielded complaints of damage to property, littering and trespassing related to these specialized watercraft. Additional access points were created along several of our rivers and there is now a multitude of “outfitters” providing kayak services in the region.



Kayakers continue to explore the regions many rivers and streams in increasing numbers. Several searches were conducted this year to locate overdue boaters. Here a kayaker begins an overnight trip on the Flint River.

Cpl. Steve Robinson, Cpl. Scott Carroll, Sgt. Jim Atchley and RFC Quinn Fogle conducting boating patrols during the holiday period on Lake WF George. RFC Fogle holds up three fingers, indicative of the three BUI arrests he made during the patrols.





Sergeant Jim Atchley (L) and Corporal Steve Robinson on an evening patrol on Lake WF George.

While following up on the report of a huge 190 class whitetail buck killed in Webster County in November, RFC Quinn Fogle discovered the hunter had failed to purchase the required licenses. Following an interview by Quinn, it was determined the hunter had knowingly and intentionally hunted without licenses and the deer was confiscated. If killed legally this buck would have easily surpassed the current 157 3/8 record for Webster County.

RFC Quinn Fogle and the illegally taken 190 class Webster County buck.



Corporal Tony Cox and RFC Jon Penuel concluded an investigation related to multiple statewide alligator hunting violations that were discovered at the conclusion of the last alligator season. The two officers began a complex investigation focused on violations related to the state's alligator hunting program. Initially begun to look into violations of licenses infractions and unreported kills, the investigation has revealed a pattern of abuses of DNR's quota system by applicants, inherent issues with the quota system, and potential conspiracy among subjects across the state. Their investigation garnered them the region's selection for 2016's Investigator(s) of the Year.



Region 5 Investigator of the Year RFC Jon Penuel (L) and Sergeant David Ruddell.



Corporal Tony Cox Region 5 Investigator of the Year

Corporal Steve Robinson conducted foot and ATV patrols to address illegal and unsafe activities within Providence Canyon State Park. Corporal Robinson documented numerous violations and worked closely with park staff to improve signage, fencing and trails to increase visitor safety.



Corporal Steve Robinson patrolling the canyons at Providence Canyon State Park.

Wardens also addressed violations on state owned properties such as range violations on the wildlife management areas.

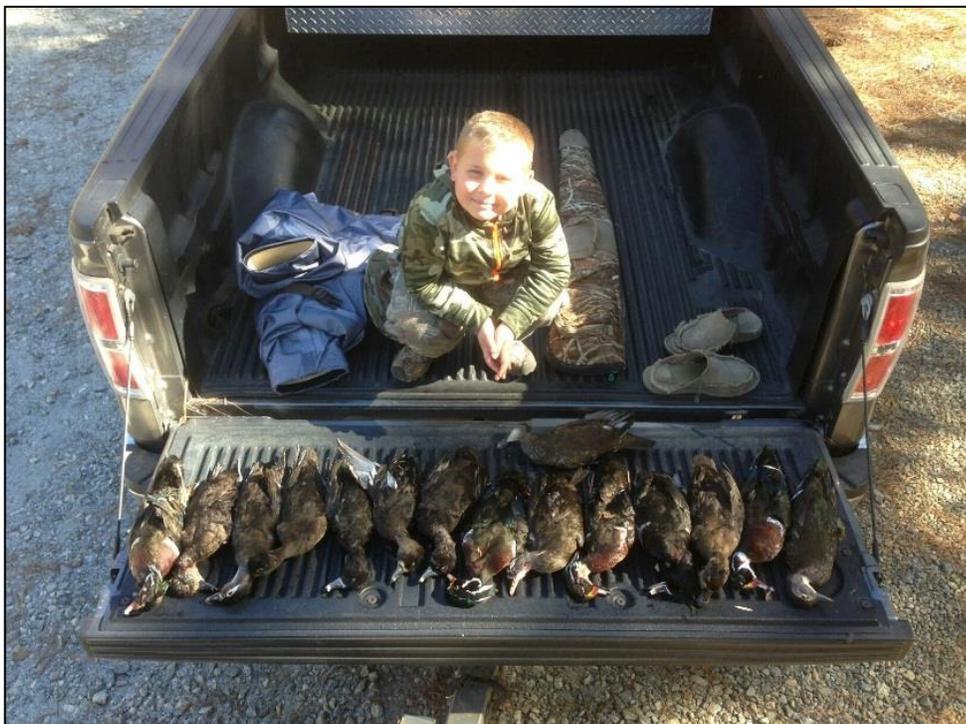


Game Wardens patrolled WMA Ranges to curtail destruction of the facilities as pictured here.



Corporal Steve Robinson with evidence associated with WMA range violations

Waterfowl season was very productive across the region and wardens continued to address violations of hunting over bait, over the limits and boating safety. Regulations were also implemented on Lake Blackshear during the regulation cycle to address complaints related to waterfowl hunters shooting to close to houses and public use areas.



A young hunter accompanying his father and friends on a successful Georgia duck hunt.

Wardens were busy during alligator season as hunters were encountered hunting both day and night. Wardens in Region 5 have to contend with three alligator seasons involving Alabama, Florida and Georgia. The Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge is also located on the Chattahoochee River in both Alabama and Georgia and requires constant attention, as it is not open to alligator hunting. Georgia wardens also attended the Alabama Game and Fish annual alligator meeting to provide insight into both state's seasons.



Corporal Scott Carroll with remains of illegally killed alligator.

Game Wardens received many complaints related to illegal dumping and burning of various materials as people attempt to avoid disposal fees at landfills. Wardens worked closely with county code enforcement officers to curtail the activity.

Household trash dumped under local bridge being investigated by Corporal Greg Wade.



Building demolition material being burned in a residential area to avoid landfill fees.

CIRT team investigators responded to several incidents during the past year investigating boating fatalities and hunting incidents.



CIRT Team member Corporal Clint Martin searching for evidence related to a hunting incident.

RFC Quinn Fogle was recognized as the State Waterfowl Officer of the Year and awarded the Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award for his efforts.



Corporal Scott Carroll and Waterfowl Officer of the Year RFC Quinn Fogle, with ducks confiscated following the apprehension of several hunters shooting a baited pond.

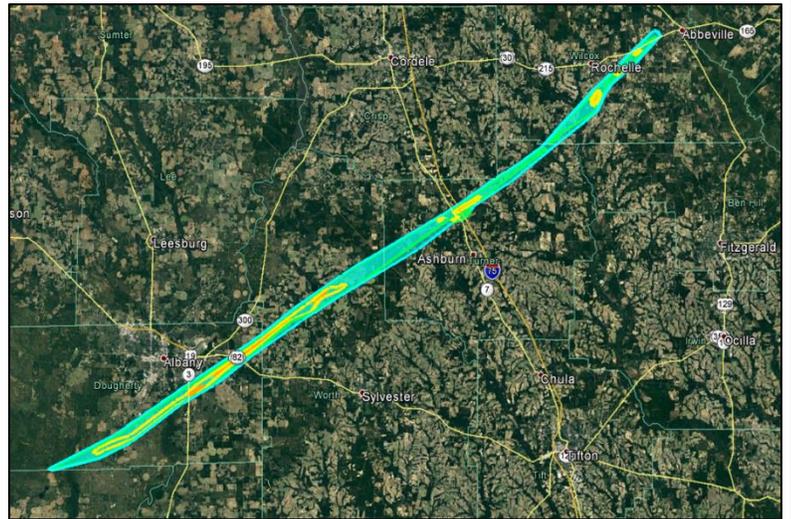
## Search and Rescue Operations

January was a busy month for wardens in Southwest Georgia due to response and extended service to numerous storms. Downtown Albany was struck in early January with an F0 tornado/straight line winds event that required two weeks of 24-hour security. As the response for that storm wound down, Southwest Georgia was struck three days later with a rare Particularly Dangerous Situation (tornado) forecast by the National Weather Service. During the three day event, six tornadoes ranging from F0 to F3 intensity, struck ten counties in Region 5. The most notable storms were two F3 tornadoes. The first was a pre-dawn tornado that struck Thomas, Brooks, and Cook Counties causing eleven deaths. Later that afternoon, another F3 tornado struck Baker, Dougherty, Worth, Turner, and Crisp causing five more deaths. Wardens were on scene and assisting at each of these events within minutes and continued search/relief efforts for over two more weeks.



Destruction from the pre-dawn F3 tornado that struck Thomas, Brook, and Cook counties, killing 11 and injuring 45 persons. Seven fatalities occurred at Sunshine Acres (pictured) in Cook County.

The path of the long-track F3 tornado that struck Region 5 on the afternoon of January 22<sup>nd</sup>.



Game Wardens searching for victims in the heavily damaged areas along Holly Drive in south Albany.

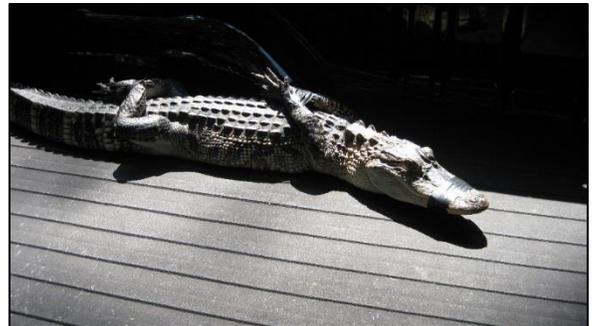


Aerial view of the Holley Drive Trailer Park in Albany destroyed by F-3 tornado on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Five people were killed here by the F3 tornado that traveled through Baker, Dougherty, Worth and Crisp counties.

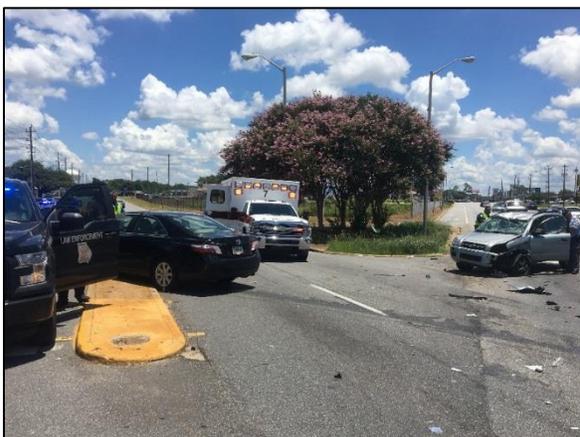
Wardens responded to various calls for service assisting residents and other agencies. Alligators, snakes and other wildlife were relocated, or the public was provided nuisance abatement information by wardens.



Grey Rat snake removed from a house in Albany



One of many nuisance alligators being relocated



Wardens assisting injured occupants at a wreck involving a rollover.

On July 11<sup>th</sup> Corporal Greg Wade, RFC Eric White and Sergeant Ellis Wynn assisted Albany Police and Fire Departments with the search for a missing 12 year old child with autism.



During the two day incident the wardens searched the area around the residence using Corporal Wade's K-9 and conducted additional searches in wooded areas near the location. The child was eventually located deceased in a pond.

Corporal Greg Wade and his K-9 Trigg assisting Albany Police Department during a search for a missing child in Albany Georgia

### **Game Wardens were busy attending training throughout the year.**

Throughout the year, wardens attended numerous training sessions to build upon their expertise. Rangers attended Dove Field Training to stay abreast of current "normal agricultural practices" and NASBLA-BUI Seated Battery training to improve impaired operator detection.



RFC Penuel attended the NASBLA-BUI Instructor course and assisted in implementing the training statewide.

RFC Jon Penuel instructs wardens on the latest BUI detection techniques.

Corporal Greg Wade, RFC Jon Penuel and Corporal Jesse Harrison attended the Field Training Officer (FTO) training program. Corporal Wade attended a two-week Defensive Tactics Refresher Course and RFC White became the region's newest sonar operator after attending a five day sonar training course at Lake Lanier. RFC White also attended the 2017 Hunting Incident Academy sponsored by Florida Fish and Wildlife.



FTO Corporal Tony Cox discussing operations with Ranger David Jones

Cpl. Wade attended the 12-week K-9 Handler Course at GPSTC with K-9 Trigg to fill the Region 5 K-9 vacancy following Bob Holley's promotion to sergeant and K-9 Creek's untimely passing. Throughout the twelve weeks, Greg and his K-9 worked together on criminal apprehension, tracking, article locating, obedience, officer protection, and wildlife detection. Since graduation, Cpl. Wade and K9 Trigg have provided numerous Information and Education programs and have assisted several counties with article/evidence searches and tracking suspects.

Corporal Greg Wade became the region K-9 handler and completed K-9 training at the training center with his new partner "Trigg".



All wardens participated in advanced lifesaving skills. Region wardens assisted with course instruction at the 31<sup>st</sup> Advanced Ranger Academy. Sergeant Jim Atchley taught the Vehicle and Boat EVOC course in the academy. RFC Penuel taught Wilderness First Responder and the updated Standardized Field Sobriety Training. Cpl. Wade taught Water Survival, Defensive Tactics, Quail-Shooting Preserve Enforcement and Man Tracking. Corporal Steve Robinson taught ATV and wildlife identification. Corporal Scott Carroll completed the PMP program at Columbus State University and is involved in training as a Firearms, ALERRT, ATV Instructor, and Environmental Law. Sergeant Jim Atchley continues to attend training related to his duties with the Peer Support Team and is participating in the PMP program.

## Region VI- Metter (Southeast)



Back Row, L-R: RGR Randell Meeks, Cpl. Tim Hutto, Cpl. John Stokes, Cpl. Tommy Daughtrey, Cpl. Mark Pool, Cpl. Kevin Joyce, Cpl. Jason Shipes, Cpl. Shaymus McNeely, Cpl. Mike Wilcox, Cpl. Dan Stiles, RFC Daniel North  
Middle Row, L-R: Sgt. Patrick Dupree, Sgt. Jon Barnard, AA3 April Thrift, Sgt. Chris Moore, Capt. Scott Klingel, Sec. Christina Colquitt, Sgt. Brian Hobbins, Sgt. James McLaughlin, Sgt. Morty Wood  
Front Row, L-R: RGR Lamar Burns, RFC Rodney Horne, RFC Clint Jarriel, RGR Joseph Cowart, RFC Bobby Sanders, RGR Christopher Thompson, RFC Jordan Crawford, RFC Jason Miller  
Not Pictured: Cpl. Chase Altman, RFC Allen Mills, RFC Sam Williams

### Personnel

Region VI received two new hires from the 31<sup>st</sup> Advanced Game Warden Academy. Ranger Joseph Cowart was assigned to S.C. Foster/Charlton County and Ranger Chris Thompson was assigned to Atkinson and Lanier Counties. Ranger Lamar Burns transferred from PRHS to Region VI and is assigned to Telfair County. Corporal Brian Hobbins promoted from Region III to Region VI as Sergeant over Bulloch, Candler, Effingham, Emanuel, Jenkins and Screven counties. April Thrift became the Administrative Assistant 3 for the Region Office after Sharon Simms promoted to the Administrative Assistant to the Director. Christina Colquitt became the Secretary for the Region VI Office after Melinda Monroe transferred to the dispatch center for DPS. RFC Debbie Brannen retired in September of 2016 from her assignment in Evans County. Evans County was combined with the Tattnall County assignment for RFC Clint Jarriel. Ranger Judd Sears transferred from his S.C. Foster/Charlton County assignment to Region VII in October 2016. RFC Keith McDonald left the department in August 2016. RFC McDonald was assigned to Lowndes County. Ranger Randell Meeks was promoted to Ranger 2 in July 2016. RFC Rodney Horne was married in December 2016 to Melissa Horne. RFC Jordan Crawford welcomed a baby boy (Wesley Randall Crawford) in July 2016.

## Awards

Game Warden of the Year for Region VI is Jason Shipes. Corporal Jason Shipes was also selected as the Investigative Ranger of the Year. RFC Allen Mills was selected as the Hunter Education Instructor of the Year for the State Of Georgia. The TORCH Award for Region VI is RFC Jordan Crawford. The Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award nominee for Region VI is Corporal Tommy Daughtrey. Corporal Tommy Daughtrey was also selected as the National Wild Turkey Federation Officer of the Year.



Safari Club International banquet in Atlanta honoring Cpl. Jason Shipes as Investigative Officer of the Year – January 2017 (Capt. Scott Klingel & Cpl. Jason Shipes)

## Investigations

On Wednesday July 27, 2016, RFC Jason Miller and Sgt. Chris Moore went to an area in Bulloch County to investigate a complaint of an illegal tire dump. Game wardens located an estimated 800 - 1,000 tires dumped on a small piece of property. After a two-month long investigation and multiple interviews, RFC Miller charged a suspect with felony dumping of egregious waste.



Sergeant McLaughlin's work section spent many hours attempting to apprehend individuals trespassing and hunting Indian artifacts without permission. The wardens obtained a camera and through social media the suspects were identified.

During the months of October and November 2016, RFC Jason Miller received numerous complaints concerning illegal hunting near the Brooklet area. The same two names kept coming up from multiple complainants. While investigating the two subjects, RFC Miller discovered pictures of one of the subjects with numerous antlered deer on his social media site. None of the deer had been properly recorded. While checking on the subject RFC Miller discovered that, the suspect was a convicted felon and had outstanding warrants. Using this information RFC Miller secured several arrest warrants for the subject and a search warrant for his residence. After several attempts to find the suspect, officers located him at a residence in Brooklet. They found firearms, drugs, and several deer racks at the residence. The suspect was arrested and charged with multiple counts of wildlife, drug, and weapons violations.





On June 1, 2017 at 0430 hrs. Corporal Shaymus McNeely and RFC Jason Miller checked an area of ongoing illegal artifact digging on Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area in Screven County. Officers observed two people using head mounted and hand held lights. One subject was on the ground digging with their hands the other was digging

with a shovel. After securing the suspects RFC Miller and Cpl. McNeely conducted a search of the suspect's vehicle. A plastic bag containing artifacts was located and seized. Illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia were also discovered. A search warrant was executed on the residence and additional artifacts and drugs were found. Both subjects were charged with illegal digging and trespassing as well as multiple drug charges.

### **Night Hunting and CDP Activity**

Region VI continued its success in apprehending night hunters. Forty-two groups were caught with 273 contacts. These contacts included hunting deer at night, hunting big game from a public road, hunting from a vehicle, HUI, DUI, theft by receiving stolen property, driving on suspended license, blinding wildlife, possession of an open container, hunting without permission and multiple drug charges.



Evidence photo from Emanuel County night hunt stop.

Region VI used the Department's new fixed wing aircraft with equipped with a high powered camera system for several night flight details.



Sergeant James McLaughlin stopping a group of individuals spotlighting for deer. This image was taken from one half mile away.

Wardens are spending more time checking for crop damage permit compliance. This effort has resulted in contacts for violations of permits as well as several contacts for night hunting activity.

Corporal Tim Hutto with confiscated heads from an investigation of crop damage permit violations.



## Response to natural disasters

In the past few years, LED has been quick to respond for calls of assistance. This last year was no exception with Mother Nature dealing several blows to Georgia. Hurricane Hermine required some assistance, but Hurricane Matthew packed a punch. Nearly all of the Wardens in Region VI were involved in the state wide response when Hurricane Matthew struck the Georgia coast. Wardens assisted in evacuation/traffic control, debris clearing, security and other recovery details. Region VI Office served as the Incident Command Post for the response.

RFC Allen Mills operating a chainsaw in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew



Region VI serving as ICP in the Hurricane Matthew response.

Region VI sent Wardens to assist local agencies with traffic and other public safety issues during the winter storm Helena in the Atlanta/Metro area. South Georgia was struck by several tornadoes and Region VI Wardens responded. Wardens assisted in search and rescue, security and cleanup efforts in multiple areas affected by the storms.



Seven lives were taken and 36 mobile homes were destroyed at the Sunshine Acres mobile home park in Cook County due to one of the several storms that hit Georgia. (Sergeant Morty Wood & Sergeant Patrick Dupree)

Damage from one of the tornadoes that hit the Albany area.



A lightning strike started the West Mims Fire in the Okefenokee Swamp. The massive wildfire burned more than 152,000 acres. GA DNR LED responded along with many other agencies that included several states, federal and private personnel. Wardens served a vital role in providing security, traffic control, and safety patrols. Wardens also provided additional eyes for spotting flare-ups along the swamp perimeter. The response to the wildfire lasted for most of the spring of 2017.



Controlling access to the National Wildlife Refuge.

Region VI Wardens also participated with Region VII and the National Guard in Operation Vigilant Guard. This is an exercise in providing assistance to the barrier islands in case they are affected by severe storms.



Wardens with their ATV's and the National Guard support helicopter.

### **Other Activities**

Along with working several natural disasters, Wardens also completed their normal duties of working boating accidents, hunting accidents, drownings, and search and rescues. Community support for DNR LED is vital and Region VI has done well in developing that support.



Game Wardens participated in the Natural Resources Conservation Workshop field day held at Paradise Public Fishing Area in Berrien County. The wardens assisted approximately 160 young men and women with firearms safety and shooting sporting clays at the event.

Sergeant Patrick Dupree and RFC Daniel North served as guides for the March 2017 NWTF youth turkey hunt in Lowndes County. Pictured below is the results of the event.



Wardens participated in numerous Career Days at local colleges and high schools. As well as having booths and laser shot games set up at local fairs and other community events.



RFC Sam Williams at Echols High School Career Day

## Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)



**Pictured (L/R)**  
**Kneeling, L-R:** Sgt. Mark Carson, Captain Bob Lynn, Sgt. Damon Winters, Sgt. Phillip Scott, Sgt. Chris Ridley, Sgt. Cindy Miller.  
**Standing, L-R:** Mechanic Gary Denis, Cpl. Bill Bryson, RFC Kiel Toney, RFC Jack Thain, Chaplin Greg Loskoski, Cpl. Barry Britt, Cpl. Randy Aspinwall, Cpl. Bobby White, Cpl. Buster Cooper, RFC Patrick Gibbs, RFC Tim Morris, RFC Mark Day, RFC Jay Bright, RFC Judd Sears, RFC David Brady, RNG Doug Chambers, RFC Colte Shaske, Cpl. John Evans.  
**On Boat, L-R:** Cpl. Kate Hargrove, P/T secretary Rhonda Knight, AOC Janette Senior, License Clerk Kay Readdick  
**Not pictured:** K-9 Case and RNG Josh Cockrell

Region VII is comprised of nine counties (Chatham, Bryan, Liberty, Long, Wayne, McIntosh, Brantley, Glynn, and Camden). We focus heavily on the commercial fishing industry and offshore Federal fisheries. This year was another typical year for the rangers in Region VII. Our efforts ranged from our “normal” hunting and fishing violations to assisting other agencies with crowd control to numerous illegal commercial fishing violations.

July 2, Cpl. Bobby White and RFC Patrick Gibbs were on patrol on the Altamaha River. Cpl. White noticed something in the water drifting downstream. He told RFC Gibbs, who stood up at the bow of the boat to get a better look. RFC Gibbs saw a yellow toy being held by a small child who was sinking below the surface of the water. Cpl. White pulled the boat to the spot where the child went down and RFC Gibbs dropped his gun belt and dove into the water. RFC Gibbs was able find the child under the murky water of the Altamaha River and swim toward the surface. His life jacket deployed and shot him and the child to the surface. Cpl. White was waiting and pulled the boat alongside RFC Gibbs and the child. Cpl. White pulled the child into the boat and began back thrust. The child expelled a large amount of water and began breathing on his own and talking to the Game Wardens. The Game Wardens pulled up to the people on the bank who had noticed the commotion. RFC Gibbs gave the child to his father, who hadn’t noticed the child being swept from the sandbar by the current.

On July 21st, around 1330 hrs. , Glynn County Drug Task Force requested assistance from LED with a fugitive out of North Carolina. The US Marshal's Fugitive Task Force had made contact with Glynn County about the fugitive working on a commercial shrimp trawler in Brunswick. The trawler was tied to the dock and under surveillance by Glynn County. LED Captain Bob Lynn and Sergeants Mark Carson and Chris Ridley were asked to provide a boat in case the fugitive jumped into the river or if the trawler left the dock. A short while later, the trawler left the dock heading out the shipping channel. LED and a USCG boat intercepted the trawler escorting it back to the dock were members of the Glynn County Task Force were waiting. Once at the dock, Captain Lynn and Sgt. Carson boarded the trawler. The fugitive was arrested without incident. LED officers assisted with a search of the trawler.

On October 7, Hurricane Mathew made landfall on the Georgia Coast. Luckily the Hurricane stayed offshore. The Georgia coast got Hurricane and Tropical Force winds, rain, and some storm surge. Rangers from all over the state were put in stand by status and some were activated to a Strike Team. These teams were staged up and down the coast for re-entry. On the morning of the 8th Rangers from Region VII made their way back to check on their residence. Once their residences were checked, Rangers met up with Strike teams to assist with storm damage. Jekyll Island and St. Simons Island in Glynn County and McIntosh County had significant damage and DNR Rangers assisted with getting roads cleared. The Strike Teams consisted of 7-8 Rangers with chainsaws and skid steer tractors. This aided counties with tree removals.



During the 2016 hunting season, Game Wardens in Region VII conducted numerous night hunting patrols. Region VII has two scheduled night flights utilizing our air assets. These patrols included catching 13 groups of night hunters. Twenty-five people were cited with 65 citations and one warning.

On the night of November 25, 2016, RFC Thain and Sgt. Scott were observing an area for night hunting violations. The Rangers noticed a light coming from a house very nearby. The light was sweeping over very good deer habitat. The Rangers approached the house and discovered that the individual shining the light over deer habitat was holding a rifle. Upon investigation the Rangers found that the rifle was a 30-06, loaded, and had a round in the chamber. The hunter was charged with hunting deer at night.

On December 11th, Ranger Judd Sears responded to a night hunting complaint from Brantley County Sheriff's Office near Hoboken. Ranger Sears arrived on scene and a Brantley County deputy had observed a subject shoot from a vehicle at a deer from GA 520/ Hwy 82. Ranger Sears located a 20 gauge shotgun in the vehicle along with a spent 20 gauge shell. Multiple flashlights were located throughout the vehicle. These subjects were in possession of one illegally killed deer from prior to this traffic stop. The driver admitted to killing the first deer at night at another location and the passenger admitted to shooting at this deer. Violations were documented for hunting deer at night, hunting big game from a public road, and hunting from a motor vehicle.

On December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016, RFC Toney checked a fisherman coming in at the Demeries Creek boat ramp. The fisherman had approximately six bushels of oysters. Upon investigation, RFC Toney found that the fisherman gathered the oysters from an area not approved by the Department. It was also determined that the fisherman had no fishing license, no registration, and had approximately four bushels of oysters over the limit. The fisherman was cited for the violations. All the oysters were seized and returned to the water.



On December 31, Sgt. Cindy Miller was conducting dockside boarding's for the Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) when she came across a boat that had 4 red snapper. Evidence was collected and the case was turned over to NOAA to handle. Red snapper are illegal to catch and possess in Federal waters.

Region VII replaced one 35' Contender that was a 2001 model with a 2017 12 Meter (40') Impact made by Boston Whaler. This patrol boat is equipped with triple Mercury 350 Verado Outboard motors, A/C, Garmin Chart plotter with Radar and Side Scan Sonar capabilities. The purchase took 2 JEA cycles to complete all of the purchases. This patrol vessel will be utilized for offshore and near shore patrols. This patrol vessel will also allow Game Wardens to patrol Marine Protected Areas (MPA's) that are located 80-115 miles offshore of Georgia's coast. This vessel was a \$400,000.00 investment that will serve Region VII for years to come.



On Friday, January 13, 2017, RFC Thain and Sgt. Scott were conducting a saltwater patrol checking for compliance with state and federal laws. The two Game Wardens were patrolling the area of the Medway River close to St. Catherine Sound. They stopped a recreational fishing vessel that was coming in from offshore at approximately 1650 hours. The vessel had two men on board. Upon checking the vessel for compliance, I found a Red Snapper approximately 16.5 inches long. Possession of Red Snapper is closed in federal waters and the Red Snapper that the two men had was undersized by Georgia law. The information will be turned over to the National Marine Fishery Service.

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, RFC David Brady concluded a commercial crabbing investigation that he began on February 14. Multiple commercial traps had been located in the closed water of Turtle River and after investigating further Brady determined that several of the traps had been stolen from another commercial fisherman. The suspect was charged with placing crab traps in closed water, working traps of another without permission, theft by receiving stolen property and operating boat without having commercial numbers displayed. The stolen traps were returned to the rightful owner.

On April 20<sup>th</sup>, Game Warden Cpl. John Evans responded to a boating Incident at the Meeting Street boat ramp in St. Mary's. The 24-year-old operator struck the corner of the dock at a high rate of speed causing significant damage to the 17 foot vessel. There was no damage to the dock. The operator and passenger refused treatment by EMS on scene. After interviewing the operator, he was arrested for BUI and had a BAC of .172.

On April 29th, Cpl. John Evans and RFC Patrick Gibbs were patrolling the Altamaha River around the Barrington area. At just before midnight the game wardens encountered a boat with improper lights. They stopped the vessel and discovered it was being operated by a subject the game wardens had charged with BUI last year. His boating privileges were suspended. Further investigation showed the operator was again under the influence and was also in possession of crystal methamphetamine. The violator was arrested and charged with BUI, operating while privileges are suspended, improper lights, no registration, and violation of the GA controlled substance act (Felony possession of methamphetamine).

On May 9, 2017, Ranger Doug Chambers, Corporal Jay Morgan, and Sgt. Cindy Miller were on saltwater patrol offshore of Little Tybee Island and noticed the Captain Hai shrimp vessel appeared to be dragging inside three miles (state waters) which was closed. The Captain Hai was approximately 2.62 miles offshore dragging. They followed the Captain Hai to Nelson Seafood dock in Thunderbolt and advised Nguyen that he was being charged with using power drawn nets in closed waters (more than 1/4 mile). They advised Nguyen he did not have a valid state commercial fishing and commercial boat license, nor did he have a valid Federal Penaeid Permit. Captain Hai was charged with a state violation of using power drawn nets 2.62 miles inside. Captain Hai was also charged federally for not having a valid Federal Penaeid Shrimp Permit and 115 pounds of shrimp were confiscated.

May 20, 2017, Captain Bob Lynn and RFC Patrick Gibbs assisted with weighing in the days catch at the 6th annual Fishing for a Cure pan fish tournament in Long County. The tournament raised enough money to assist six families with special needs children by presenting a \$12,000 check to reach family.





On May 22, 2017 at approximately 1611 hours, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Agent Ben Hughes, Sgt. Cindy Miller, Cpl. Barry Britt, and Cpl. Jay Morgan checked a boat at Lazaretto Creek boat ramp. During an inspection of a boat the officers found undersized black sea bass and an illegal red snapper. They also found shark fins hidden in the vessel. Federal charges were brought against the fisherman.

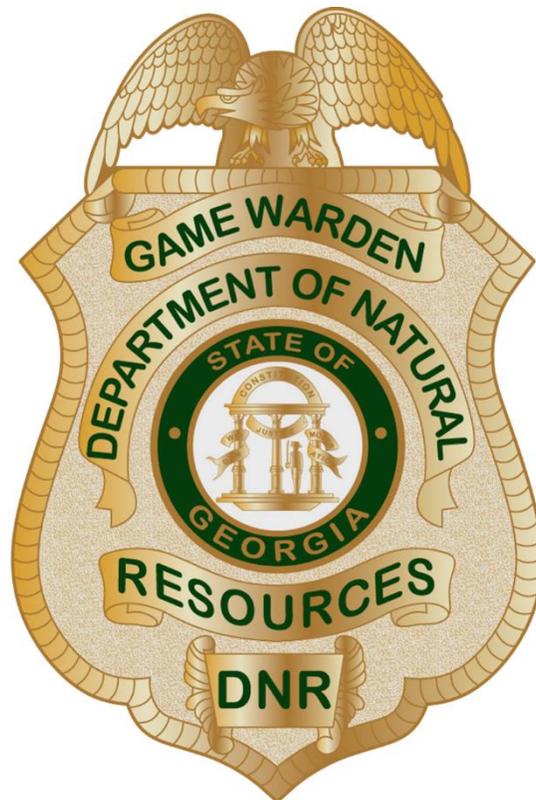
On June 24, 2017 Sgt. Scott and RFC Morris were patrolling the salt water fishing areas of Bryan County. The two Game Wardens were slowly approaching a vessel with two men on board fishing. RFC Morris noticed one of the men leaning over near the back of the boat and a large fish in the water. As the Game Wardens continued to get closer to the fishermen they noticed that the large fish was now drifting away from the anchored vessel. The fish was retrieved from the water and found to be a large Red Drum. When asked about the fish one of the anglers admitted to having the fish on board but trying to sink or otherwise get rid of the fish before they could be checked. The size limit for Red Drum is a slot limit from 14-23 inches. This Red Drum was 41 inches long, 18 inches over the limit. The fish was seized and the fisherman was cited for possession of the illegal Red Drum and for concealing wildlife.



During this year, Region VII had excellent officers performing above and beyond expectations. Cpl. John Evans was the Region Ranger of the Year, RFC David Brady was the Region Boating Officer of the Year, RFC Patrick Gibbs was the Torch Award winner, and RFC Jack Thain was the Region Investigator of the Year.

Region VII is the only Region capable of providing a unique opportunity to assist the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) by participating in a Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA). Officers enforce Federal Fishing laws and regulations for NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement from 3 miles to 200 miles offshore of Georgia's Coast. During this time period, Region VII rangers boarded 62 Shrimp trawlers contacting 150 people regarding Turtle Excluder Devices and net dimension. We documented 4 state violations and 3 Federal violations regarding TED enforcement. 4 Trawlers were caught trawling in Georgia waters while the shrimping season was closed. Game Wardens checked 144 boats and contacted 639 people during JEA patrols. These are the hours provided during this agreement period, July 1, 2016–June 30, 2017 include the following:

- Large Vessel: 245 vessel hours (3 officers per vessel)
- Mid-Range Vessel: 217 vessel hours (2 officers per vessel)
- GRNMS: 50 vessel hours (3 officers per vessel)
- Dockside Inspection: 196 man-hours
- ALWTRP: 76 vessel hours
- Aircraft Support hours- 50 flight-hours
- Public Outreach: 78 man-hours



## **Investigative Unit**

The Investigative Unit (IU) is comprised of two full-time investigators. The IU is responsible for undercover investigations, Special Permit Unit (SPU) inspections and violations, the administration of the Critical Incident Reconstruction Team (CIRT) and the Marine Theft Unit (MTU). The IU depends heavily on assistance from uniformed Game Wardens. Statewide, 14 Game Wardens perform a collateral duty called "Regional Investigator". Regional Investigators assist the IU with various duties.

### **Undercover Investigations**

The Region Investigators are full-time Game Wardens who have received training in undercover operations and equipment. They perform this collateral duty in addition to their everyday Game Warden duties. The primary function of the Investigative Unit is to provide uniform Game Wardens with investigative support. The Investigative Unit is responsible for plain-clothes and long-term investigations.

Last year, the Investigative Unit conducted and managed over 329 investigations and calls for assistance from the field. These investigations were comprised of intelligence gathering, buy/bust, and both short and long-term investigations. The focus of many of these investigations included the sale or possession of wildlife and wild animals. These violations are difficult to address without the aid of undercover officers.

### **Critical Incident Reconstruction Team (CIRT)**

Georgia has 16 CIRT investigators assigned throughout the state. CIRT investigates all fatality and serious injury boating and hunting incidents. Each investigator receives specialized training on investigating and presenting these cases. Last year, CIRT investigated 14 boating and seven hunting incidents. These incidents resulted in 19 fatalities.

### **Marine Theft Unit (MTU)**

The primary function of the MTU is to assist law enforcement officers in the field. The MTU conducts computer database and offline searches, locates hidden hull identification numbers, and assists with locating and recovering stolen vessels. The MTU also serves as the point of contact for customers as well as court systems related to the abandoned vessel process. Last year, the MTU received 86 abandoned vessel requests from the public and fielded numerous phone calls related to the abandoned vessel process.

## **Special Permits Unit**

The Law Enforcement Division of our agency administers the Special Permits Unit. This unit is responsible for permitting captive wildlife and wild animals in addition to some specialty-take permits such as Scientific Collection Permits. The Unit also coordinates inspections on all permitted wild animal facilities throughout the state.

## K-9 Unit

The Division continues to use K-9s to enhance patrol efforts by Conservation Rangers and provide assistance to other agencies for man tracking and article searches. Training this year included a refresher on Tactical Tracking for Felons/Dangerous Suspects. Currently the Division has eight K-9/Handler teams deployed statewide.

Four new K-9s were acquired and trained in house by the Unit's chief handler. The K-9 School is 10 weeks in duration and is held at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth. The agency uses the German Sheppard breed imported from the Czech Republic. K-9/Handler Teams are trained in wildlife detection, man tracking, article searches, officer protection, apprehension, agility and obedience. Georgia currently has eight K-9/Handler teams across the state.



L-R: Cpl. Books Varnell and K-9 Rock, RFC Micheal Crawley and K-9 Storm, Cpl. Tim Hutto and K-9 Titan, Cpl. Bob Holley and K-9 Creek, RFC Keith Page and K-9 Drake, RFC Eric Isom and K-9 Colt, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen and K-9 Ruger, Cpl. Kevin Joyce and K-9 Briar



## Training Unit

The 2016 In-Service Training consisted of an 8-hour block entitled NASBLA Seated Battery Transition Training course. This course was designed to transition officers into new testing protocols, which allow the marine officer the advantage of conducting sobriety tests while still out on the water with a validated degree of certainty. No longer is it necessary to detain suspected intoxicated boat operations and take them ashore to conduct conventional “standing SFSTs”. The Seated Battery Transition Course consists of a review of horizontal gaze nystagmus, validation of the SFSTs, administrative procedures for administering and evaluating the seated battery of SFSTs, demonstrations and student practice of the seated battery of SFSTs, evaluation of test subjects, and a student proficiency exam and check off. Rangers were also provided with a 3-hour block of Dove Field Training. This mandatory training was designed to increase accountability and consistency in enforcement efforts of Georgia’s dove fields. Officers also received a 3-hour block of instruction entitled “Officer Involved Shooting” taught by GBI Agent John Durden. The purpose of this training was to prepare Game Wardens for the expectations of GBI investigators during Use of Force Investigations. This training was also mandatory for all certified officers. In addition, rangers were provided with a block of Firearms Requalification and Use of Deadly Force training within each Region. This course is part of the required yearly in-service training and is very helpful in updating officer’s knowledge on topics they are involved with daily.



L-R: Training & Dev. Spec. I Mandy James, Lt. Sam O’Neal, PT Secretary Debra Hollar

During 2017 In-Service training, all Game Wardens received the NASBLA Seated Battery transition training course as part of their annual Standardized Field Sobriety training. The officers will now use the seated battery when evaluating suspected BUI offenders.

In May, the entire agency began training in Critical Incident Management by sending front line responders to a 24-hour Critical Incident Management Class. The class, coordinated by the Law Enforcement Division with instruction delivered by instructors from each division, was provided to a cross-section of employees from across the agency to continue fostering teamwork and interdivisional collaboration. The class uses curriculum developed by the IACP and incorporates tabletop exercises with scenarios that are typical for a Natural Resource Agency response.

Officer Involved Shooting Training was conducted for all DNR POST-certified officers. This training was conducted in all seven regions by Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) ASAC John Durden. The training was designed to inform officers of what to do if involved in, or responding to, an officer involved shooting. It also provided information of what to expect from the GBI when they investigate these incidents.

The Training Unit also hosted the 31<sup>st</sup> Game Warden Academy. During the 15-week academy, cadets received a wide variety of Conservation Law Enforcement specific training. This training included 80 hours of NASBLA BOAT course training for BCM (Boat Crew Member) and BOSAR (Boat Operator Search And Rescue). These comprehensive courses were delivered at Lake Walter F. George by Pete Louzao from NASBLA and our in-house NASBLA certified officers. Water survival training was also implemented into the 31<sup>st</sup> Game Warden Academy. The 10-hour course was provided weekly in 1-hour modules. Cadets swam approximately three miles during the training. During most of the training, cadets were pants, gun belt, shoes, and ballistic vest in order to provide the most realistic situations possible.



## Aviation Unit



L-R, Larry Rogers, Capt. Steven Turner, Maj. Doc Watson, Capt. Ed Watkins, John Peberdy

The LED Aviation Support Unit supports all state agencies and all DNR Divisions, utilizing two Bell 407 helicopters, one Bell L4 and a fixed wing Quest Kodiak 100 aircraft. The Aviation Unit flew a total of 1,082 flight hours this past year, which attributed the unit receiving the 2016 Helicopter Association International (HAI) Aviation Safety Award.

The year started out with a busy July. The first support was for Operation Dry Water over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend, conducting aerial patrols over Lake Hartwell and Clarks Hill Lake. Support was also provided to the Georgia Forestry Commission in July flying 24 hours and dropping 170 buckets of water on wild fires. Support for the Georgia Forestry Commission continued throughout the year with the Aviation Unit flying a total of 143 hours and dropped 1,077 buckets of water on wild fires across the state.



The Aviation Unit flew 386 hours in support of the Division’s Game Wardens as they conducted their core mission of protecting the states waterways and woodland areas. This consisted of flying support throughout the hunting season from early fall through early spring. Game Wardens were flown on county surveys looking for baited food plots, duck ponds and illegal shrimping along the Georgia coast. Flight support was also provided for Operation Dry Water, night deer poaching/spotlighting patrols, and searches for missing person and drowning victims across the state. The Wildlife Resource Division (WRD) was provided aviation support during surveys of bald eagles, kestrel, sandhill cranes and waterfowl. Captain Ed Watkins flew these same flights along the Georgia coast in addition to surveys for sea turtles, dolphins and the tagging of manatee. In addition to the WRD surveys, the Aviation Unit flew prescribed burns on the State WMA’s during the late winter months of January through March 2017.



The Aerial Observer program has proven to be very successful. The additional trained aerial crewmembers in northern Georgia have expedited the response time for search and rescue (SAR) requests in some cases. The Aviation Unit conducted five long line rescues and flew 78 hours for search and rescue (SAR), drownings and missing person missions with aerial observers.

The Unit purchased a TASE 5000 camera system, which was installed on the Kodiak Quest fixed-wing aircraft. Three Game Wardens assumed additional duties as TASE camera operators, which has greatly enhanced the Aviation Unit’s capability to support Game Wardens in conducting their primary mission of protecting the states waterways and woodland areas.



The year ended with the Aviation Unit moving three aircraft, support equipment, maintenance shop, and the offices of four personnel to an existing hangar location on the Fulton County Charlie Brown Airport.

## Honor Guard



Front L-R: Cpl. Josh Chamber, Cpl. Travis Sweat, RFC David Brady, Cpl. Ben Payne, Cpl. Derek Dillard, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen, Cpl. Scott Carroll  
Back L-R: RFC Clint Jarriel, Cpl. Bob Holley, RFC Cody Jones, RFC Micheal Crawley, Cpl. Brooks Varnell, Cpl. Robbie Griner, Cpl. Chase Altman

### Honor Guard Details

- August 10, 2016: Honor Guard members Cpl. Ben Payne and RFC Clint Jarriel participated at the visitation for funeral for George L. Smith State Park Manager Matt Muhmel in Statesboro, Georgia.
- August 11, 2016: Honor Guard members Cpl. Ben Payne and RFC Clint Jarriel conducted a funeral detail at the funeral of George L. Smith State Park Manager Matt Muhmel in Statesboro, Georgia.
- August 18, 2016: Honor Guard members Cpl. Brooks Varnell and RFC Clint Jarriel participated in the funeral of Eastman Police Officer Tim Smith at Dodge Co. High School who was killed in the line of duty.
- October 28, 2016: Honor Guard member RFC Clint Jarriel participated at the visitation for the funeral of retired Ranger Spence Adams in Pearson, Georgia.
- October 29, 2016: Honor Guard members Cpl. Chase Altman and RFC David Brady conducted a funeral detail as honorary pallbearers for retired Ranger Spence Adams in Axon, Georgia.
- November 10, 2016: Honor Guard members Cpl. Travis Sweat and Cpl. Chase Altman participated in the funeral detail for Peach Co. Deputy Sgt. Patrick Sondron in Warner Robbins, Georgia who was killed in the line of duty.
- November 12, 2016: Honor Guard members Cpl. Jeremy Bolen and Cpl. Bob Holley participated in the funeral detail for Peach Co. Deputy Daryl Smallwood in Warner Robbins, Georgia who was killed in the line of duty.
- December 5, 2016: Honor Guard members Cpl. Scott Carroll and Cpl. Bob Holley participated in the visitation for the funeral of retired Sgt. Jack Hardage in Montezuma, Georgia.
- December 6, 2016: Honor Guard members Cpl. Scott Carroll, Cpl. Travis Sweat and RFC Clint Jarriel conducted a funeral detail for retired Sgt. Jack Hardage in Montezuma and Oglethorpe, Georgia.

- January 29, 2017: Honor Guard member RFC Cody Jones participated in the visitation for the funeral of retired Ranger George “Tom” Dooley in Ellijay, Georgia.
- January 30, 2017: Honor Guard members Sgt. Derek Dillard, Cpl. Brooks Varnell and RFC Cody Jones conducted a funeral detail for retired Ranger Georgia “Tom” Dooley in Ellijay, Georgia.
- March 5, 2017: Honor Guard members Cpl. Ben Payne and RFC Clint Jarriel conducted a funeral detail for former DNR board member Duncan Johnson Sr. in Augusta, Georgia.
- March 13, 2017: Honor Guard members Cpl. Jeremy Bolen, Cpl. Chase Altman, Cpl. Travis Sweat and RFC Clint Jarriel conducted the presentation of colors at the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Seminar for the International Association of Marine Investigators in Savannah, Georgia.
- April 8, 2017: Honor Guard members Sgt. Derek Dillard, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen and Cpl. Travis Sweat conducted a funeral detail for retired Capt. Ralph Sheppard in Atlanta, Georgia.
- April 19-21, 2017: All Honor Guard members available conducted training where they practiced marching, close order drill, presentation of colors, flag folding and the 21-gun salute.
- May 2, 2017: Honor Guard members Cpl. Scott Carroll, Cpl. Ben Payne and RFC David Brady conducted a funeral detail for retired Game Warden Talmadge “Smitty” Hughes in Richmond Hill, Georgia.
- May 17, 2017: Honor Guard members Sgt. Derek Dillard, Sgt. Bob Holley, Cpl. Scott Carroll, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen, Cpl. Travis Sweat, Cpl. Josh Chambers, Cpl. Ben Payne, Cpl. Cody Jones and Cpl. Brooks Varnell conducted the presentation of colors, laying of the wreath and 21 gun salute at the Fallen Game Warden Memorial at DNR LED Headquarters Office in Social Circle, Georgia.
- May 19, 2017: Honor Guard member Cpl. Travis Sweat participated in the Peace Officer’s Memorial Day in Macon, Georgia.
- May 22, 2017: Honor Guard members Sgt. Derek Dillard, Sgt. Bob Holley, Cpl. Ben Payne, Cpl. Scott Carroll, Cpl. Travis Sweat, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen, Cpl. Brooks Varnell and Cpl. Cody Jones participated in the Peace Officer Memorial even at the GPSTC in Forsyth, Georgia by conducted the 21-gun salute.
- June 23, 2017: Honor Guard members Sgt. Derek Dillard, Sgt. Bob Holley, Cpl. Travis Sweat, Cpl. Jeremy Bolen, Cpl. Ben Payne, Cpl. Scott Carroll and RFC David Brady participated in the 31<sup>st</sup> Advanced Game Warden Academy by conducting the presentation of colors at GPSTC in Forsyth, Georgia.



## Chaplains



**Front row, L-R - Marc Crandlemire, John Haney, Brandon Brooks, Tac Coley, Randy Lamb, Rudy Ross  
Back row, L-R – Joel Vinson, Gregory Loskoski, Charles Houston, Jr., Chip Strickland, Daryl Brown**

The 11 members of the DNR Law Enforcement Division Chaplain Corps currently serve four of the state's seven Regions.

**Promotions:**

Cpl. John Evans  
 Sgt. Brian Hobbins  
 Capt. Stan Elrod  
 Sgt. James Keener  
 Sgt. Jason Roberson  
 Capt. Rick Sellars  
 Cpl. Ben Cunningham  
 Cpl. Jeff Billips  
 Ranger 2 Doug Chambers  
 Sgt. Bob Holley  
 Cpl. Cody Jones  
 Cpl. Barton Hendrix  
 Cpl. Eric Isom

**Transfers:**

Tommy Crabb  
 Lamar Burns  
 Ken Lalumiere

**Retirements:**

Sgt. Don Dasher  
 RFC Debbie Brannen  
 Capt. Mark Padgett  
 Cpl. Tommy Gentry  
 Sgt. John VanLandingham  
 Cpl. Lee Burns  
 Ranger. 2 Jay Lewis  
 Capt. Jeff Swift

<b>Activity Summary</b>		<b>FY2017</b>
Hunter Ed Programs		158
I&E Programs		1,398
Boating Safety Programs		348
Hunter Development		328
<b>Total Programs</b>		<b>2,232</b>
Water SAR Cases		237
Water SAR Hours		3,989
Vessels Assisted		267
Water Persons Asst.		700
Land SAR Cases		156
Land SAR Hours		1,528
Land Persons Asst.		280
Hunting Incidents		33
Boating Incidents		147
Drownings		61
Hunting License Checks		22,585
Fishing License Checks		31,381
Comm. License Checks		580
Total License Checks		54,546
Boat Checks		31,103
Boating Contacts		4,240
Hunting Contacts		4,450
Fishing Contacts		2,584
Trapping Contacts		50
Environmental Contacts		360
Other Contacts		2,765
<b>Total Contacts</b>		<b>14,449</b>



# GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION



**JAMES HIRAM WALLER**

**LONNIE F. BOGGUS**

**WILLIAM EARL HOBBS**

**WILLIAM LEE BRYANT**

**ROBERT CLAYTON SIZEMORE**

**ASA EDWIN THORNTON**

**CHARLES CALLOWAY MERCER**

**ROCKY DAREN WAINWRIGHT**



IN MEMORY OF THE OFFICERS  
WHO MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE  
PROTECTING THE PEOPLE AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES OF GEORGIA

