



# GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Commissioner  
Mark Williams

Director  
Colonel Thomas  
Barnard

### Law Enforcement Division FY 2019 Annual Report



Law Enforcement  
*Off the Pavement*

Serving Since  
1911

# Headquarters



**Colonel Thomas Barnard, Director**



**Lt. Colonel Johnny Johnson,  
Assistant Director**



**Major Stephen Adams**



**Major Mike England**

# Headquarters Support Staff



**Lt. Wayne Hubbard**



**Lt. Wanda Roberts**



**Lt. Judd Smith**



**Kim Cato**



**Jen Hammonds**



**Jamie Hawkins**



**Mark McKinnon**



**Ashley Moon**



**Taye Pierce**



**Sharon Sims**



**Debbie Stephens**



**Shannon Witcher**

**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 212 POST-certified Game Wardens with statewide authority and full arrest powers and 28 non-sworn staff members. 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, two Majors, nine Captains (7 Region Supervisors, 1 Training Director, 1 Pilot), seven Lieutenants (database management, special permits/captive wildlife and wild animals, boating law administrator/administrative support, professional standards, investigations, 2 pilots), and 194 field Game Wardens (Sergeants, Corporals, Game Wardens First Class, and Game Wardens).

## **Vehicles & Equipment**

Throughout the year, the Law Enforcement Division acquired some new vehicles and equipment, utilizing funding from various sources. Vehicles obtained included two new enclosed trailers for statewide disaster response, 14 4x4 patrol vehicles, and seven patrol boats. New equipment included 28 sets of night vision goggles, 73 TASERs, seven boat motors, four FLIR camera systems for boats, body armor for the new cadets, and LTE Southern Lincs for all sworn personnel.

## **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. Last year, eight tips were received by email for various violations.

## **OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES**

### **Hurricane Michael**

In October of 2018, Game Wardens responded to Hurricane Michael in South Georgia and provided first responder operations, debris clearing, damage assessment, search and rescue and security roles. Due to the path of the storm, Game Wardens in all areas of the state were called into action and the Division logged 6,809 man-hours during the event.

### **JEA Patrols**

The Joint Agreement #17 between Georgia DNR and NOAA Office of Law Enforcement called for Georgia DNR enforcement personnel to provide a total of 1,717 hours of marine law enforcement or related work under the agreement. Georgia has five Execution Priorities. Execution Priority 1 was the Endangered Species Act. There were 383-man hours and 144 hours of at-sea vessel patrol hours dedicated to this priority, along with 36 hours of aircraft flight hours and 36 hours of aircraft personnel hours. These patrols were checking shrimp trawlers for TED and net compliance. Execution Priority 2 was dedicated to Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. There were 445-man hours and 165 hours of at-sea vessel patrols dedicated to priority 2. These patrols were to check Red Snapper compliance and any other violation dealing with Snapper/Grouper and HMS species. Execution Priority 3 was the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. There were 240-man hours and 80 hours of at-sea vessel patrols dedicated to Priority 3. Execution Priority 4 was the Lacey Act/International (IUU). There were 28 personnel hours dedicated to IUU enforcement. These patrols were assisting NOAA Enforcement Officers with the inspection of containers at the Georgia Ports. Execution Priority 5 was Marine Mammal Protection Act. There were 120-man hours and 40 at-sea vessel hours dedicated to Marine Mammal Protection. These patrols were during the months of November through March and were specifically targeting Right Whale enforcement.

## **Public Affairs**

### Media Relations and Public Outreach

The Division conducted media news conferences and ride-alongs with Game Wardens 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 2019 campaign theme was “Summer 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.

### SPLASH

The Division continued moving forward with the multi-agency water safety initiative, SPLASH. Along with a number of federal, state, and private partners, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Georgia Department of Public Health and Georgia Power, the aggressive anti-drowning campaign encourages citizens to follow these tips when enjoying beaches, pools, lakes, rivers and other bodies of water. The partners meet every 4-6 weeks to share promotional ideas and discuss implementation. Ten meetings have been held so far. SPLASH is an acronym used to encourage safety around the 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.
- **Life Jackets/Look before you leap**– Always wear a life jacket and 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.

During the year, the campaign provided public service announcements to local radio stations, increased social media messaging, stenciled painted safety messages on boat ramps and placed “Wear It Georgia” signs at numerous facilities on the state’s waterways. Currently, the Department is continuing the process of adding 250 life jacket loaner boards at public boat ramps and state parks statewide, with these locations now included on the Georgia Outdoors app.

### Social Media

LED manages a Facebook page that currently has nearly 60,000 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 500,000. The Division also has a Twitter account that is linked to Facebook, which currently has nearly 1,350 followers, a YouTube Channel with multiple safety-related videos, and an Instagram account over 5,800 followers.

Game Warden Awards Banquet

In August 2019, the LED's Command Staff was joined by the Georgia DNR Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Board Members at the Sixth Annual Game Warden 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, Cpl. Quinn Fogle from the southwest Georgia Region was named as the Division's 2019 Game Warden of the Year.



*2018 Game Warden of the Year Cpl. Cody Jones pins the one-of-a-kind badge on the 2019 winner, Cpl. Quinn Fogle.*

*2019 Game Warden of the Year, Cpl. Quinn Fogle receives his award.*



## **Statewide Awards**

### **Game Warden of the Year**

#### **Corporal Quinn Fogle**



Corporal Quinn Fogle has earned the respect of the public and his peers, through teamwork and his steadfast dedication to the Division's mission. Cpl. Fogle has been with DNR Law Enforcement since 2013. He is known to be fair and energetic in his application of the law and he strives to adopt problems that others would often bypass. This past year, he documented 153 citations, 128 warnings, and 141 violation assists, exceeding the region average by over 300%. His violator activity is 197 contacts above average and entails over 15% of the Region's work load. Some examples of his violator contacts include 91 arrest warrants issued to 10 suspects, 10 search warrants, one HUI, with one HUI assist, and nine VGCSA arrests. Quinn answered 42 citizen complaints and dedicated over 300 hours toward seven investigations. Cpl. Fogle is very involved in his community and he always looks for the opportunity to educate the public on a variety of topics. This year, he conducted 10 formal I&E programs. He taught firearms safety at the Bradley Youth Deer Hunt and was the guest speaker for the Lions Club and the Rotary Club, where he discussed the functions of the DNR Law Enforcement Division. Cpl. Fogle was selected to represent DNR LED on the Commissioner's Millennial Recruitment and Retention Committee, and he served on the Region V Game Warden Advisory Committee member. He is a member of the Special Operations Group, a Field Training Officer, and he was one of the first officers to volunteer for TASER Training.

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

#### **Game Warden First Class Patrick Gibbs – Region VI**



Game Warden First Class Patrick Gibbs is a unique Game Warden within the Law Enforcement Division and he understands, utilizes, and appreciates the old school, dirt road Game Warden ideology he learned from those before him. GWFC Gibbs understands the importance of building relationships and seeks out opportunities to serve his community. Last year, Patrick conducted seven I&E programs and teamed up with the local school's C.H.A.M.P.S. program where he taught boating safety to 360 school children. His enforcement stats are solid. During this past year, he dedicated 866 hours to wildlife enforcement, 249 hours to fishing enforcement, and 298 hours to boating enforcement. He documented 223 hunting license checks with 80 assists, 293 fishing license checks with 75 assists and conducted 125 vessel inspections with 45 assists. In addition, Patrick patrolled state-owned properties on 98 separate occasions. As a result of these efforts, he issued 106 citations and 84 written warnings. He was directly responsible for apprehending six of his section's 17 groups of night deer hunters resulting in 39 individuals being charged with over 100 violations. He led the region in total contacts and most categories, including BUIs, Hunting Turkey Over Bait, groups of night deer hunters caught, waterfowl violations, and hunting waterfowl after hours. He is a P.O.S.T instructor and currently assists with teaching Boat EVOC, SFST, and hunting laws and, for his efforts, he was recognized as the Instructor of the Year by the 32<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> Game Warden Academy classes.

## **Game Warden of the Year Nominees**

Region I- Cpl. Bart Hendrix

Region II- Cpl. Tim Vickery

Region III- GWFC Dan Schay

Region IV- GWFC David Fisher

Region V- Cpl. Quinn Fogle

Region VI- GWFC Patrick Gibbs

Region VII- Cpl. Barry Britt

## **Supervisor of the Year**

### **Captain Scott Klingel – Region VI**



Captain Scott Klingel, Region VI, is the recipient of the 2018 Supervisor of the Year Award. He is a 29-year veteran of DNR Law Enforcement and has served as Captain since 2002. His dedication to the Department, the Game Wardens, and the community are evident in his servant-style leadership, recognized by the entire region. Captain Klingel currently supervises the largest geographic region of the state (nearly 25% of the state's land mass), with 32 rural counties in southeast Georgia. While cooperating with a multitude of county entities, Scott also maintains positive working relationships with two adjacent state natural resource agencies. His leadership style focuses on meeting the Division's core mission and effectively growing

his employees. Each and every decision is carefully weighed to prevent duplicative efforts, unnecessary administrative burden, and maximization of employee efforts, which fosters efficiency and high morale. Captain Klingel is a POST Instructor and teaches Critical Incident Management throughout the state. Within the region, he plays a pivotal role in major events including forest fires, hurricanes, and floods. Scott's word is his bond. He says what he is going to do and follows through. He can be trusted to do what is in the best interest of the mission and his employees. He garners respect from his employees not through rank, but by his actions. This type of respect is the greatest accomplishment possible within the law enforcement profession. Congratulations to Captain Scott Klingel, the 2018 Supervisor of the Year.

## **NWTF Officer of the Year**

### **Corporal Derrell Worth – Region III**



Corporal Derrell Worth is the 2018 National Wild Turkey Federation Officer of the Year. He is a 20-year veteran of DNR Law Enforcement, serving in Greene County his entire career. Cpl. Worth is solid, all-around Game Warden, but he especially excels at catching violators who hunt turkey over bait. Last year, he logged 206 hours on turkey hunting patrols, resulting in nine Hunting Big Game over Bait (Turkey) contacts, one Unlawful Enticement contact, and one charge of Taking Totally Protected Wildlife (Hen Turkey). He also patrolled the WMAs in his area 23 times. On April 1, 2017, Derrell was shot by a turkey hunter who mistook him for game. Support for him poured in, evidence of his

investment in his community. Additionally, Cpl. Worth has great investigative skills and leaves no stone unturned when it comes to investigating wildlife violations. His most notable case this past season involved a hunter who had killed a hen turkey over bait and discarded the carcass several miles away. Derrell successfully gathered the necessary evidence to successfully prosecute the violator. Congratulations to Corporal Derrell Worth, the 2018 National Wild Turkey Federation Officer of the Year.

## **Investigative Game Warden of the Year**

### **Corporal Quinn Fogle - Region V**



Corporal Quinn Fogle is the 2018 Investigative Game Warden of the Year. Cpl. Fogle consistently displays the problem adoption mind-set of the Division, which has a profound and positive impact in his community. During the past year, Quinn successfully conducted several wildlife investigations utilizing social media and “old fashioned” Game Warden skills. The most notable began when he received a picture of a freshly killed buck that was posted on Snapchat and Instagram. The posts provided enough information for Quinn to request the suspect’s Snapchat and Instagram data. After compiling the information and interviewing the suspect, Cpl. Fogle was armed with a growing list of illegal activities and suspects. He obtained search warrants for the main suspect’s Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat accounts, residence, and Verizon data for three cell phones. The information gathered comprised of 3,527 pages from the three social media accounts and 3,833 pages from Verizon. Thirteen suspects were identified and interviewed and, when faced with the overwhelming evidence, each one confessed. Eighty-three arrest warrants were issued for 10 suspects resulting in 89 charges for wildlife violations. The charges included multiple counts of hunting deer at night, hunting from a public road, hunting from a motor vehicle, license violations, hunting alligators out of season, failure to record and report a harvest, and the seizure of two deer. This case is a great example of the initiative and determination that Quinn puts forth in all his activities. Congratulations to Corporal Quinn Fogle, the 2018 Investigative Game Warden of the Year.

## **Georgia Boating Officer of the Year**

### **Corporal Quinn Fogle – Region V**



Corporal Quinn Fogle is the 2018 Georgia Boating Officer of the Year. Cpl. Fogle is assigned to Early County in Region V and routinely works Lake Seminole and Lake Walter F. George. He always does an excellent job of protecting the State’s natural resources and the boating public while patrolling the Georgia’s waterways. Last year, he detected and arrested 13 vessel operators for BUI and assisted with 12 other BUI arrests. His arrests/assists accounted for over 80% of Region V’s BUI incidents for the year. He also logged 200 hours during 43 boating safety patrols. To help in providing safety information to the community, he recorded PSA’s at 10 different radio stations in the area, promoting the SPLASH Water Safety Initiative, kill switch usage, and boating safety for waterfowl hunters. During the past year, Quinn also investigated two boat incidents and documented 23 citations and 52 warnings for boating safety violations. In his short tenure, Cpl. Fogle has earned the respect of the public and his peers, through teamwork and his steadfast dedication to the mission at hand. Congratulations to Corporal Quinn Fogle, the 2018 Georgia Boating Officer of the Year.

## **The Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award Game Warden First Class Patrick Gibbs – Region VI**



Game Warden First Class Patrick Gibbs has been selected to receive the 2019 Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award. GWFC Gibbs' proactive approach with the public and firm but fair enforcement efforts have proven results in protecting this invaluable resource and in promoting safe, responsible hunter behavior. Patrick began his career in 2013 and is assigned to Evans County. His seven-county work unit has a number of waterfowl hunting opportunities, including 222 total miles on the Altamaha, Canoochee Oconee, Ocmulgee, and Ohoopsee rivers, and also the Evans County PFA, which has three ponds totaling 122 acres. Additionally, his work area includes numerous oxbow lakes on Bullard Creek and Big Hammock WMA's. Educating the public and gaining community support have been key factors in Patrick's success. Last year, he presented multiple I&E programs to local civic groups, wildlife organizations, and schools. His law enforcement efforts were outstanding this past waterfowl season. He worked over 100 hours and logged nearly 2,000 miles for waterfowl hunting enforcement. He encountered 57 separate waterfowl hunters, checked 127 licenses, and made 23 contacts and 16 assists, including 18 hunting after hours, five without a federal duck stamp, four without a license, four without a Georgia waterfowl license, and three hunting with illegal ammo (lead). He also worked five separate special waterfowl hunting details and utilized LED's Aviation Unit to conduct a waterfowl flight to locate baited areas. Congratulations to Game Warden First Class Patrick Gibbs, the 2019 Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award recipient.

## **Hunter Education Instructor of the Year Game Warden Josh Cockrell – Region IV**



Game Warden Josh Cockrell is the 2019 Hunter Education Game Warden Instructor of the Year. Assigned to Wilkinson County, GW Cockrell has done an outstanding job with Hunter Education/Development this past year. While only having been employed with DNR for 2 ½ years, he has already proven his dedication to Hunter Education and to the promotion of shooting sports. Josh was involved with several events that were the highlights of his Hunter Education efforts. For the last 22 years, DNR Law Enforcement has been involved in the annual Wilkinson County Quail Hunt for Kids. The event targets new hunters and allows them to hunt quail and compete in a sporting clays competition. GW Cockrell recruited new kids to attend the event, solicited donations for prizes from local businesses, and worked the event. He also set up the event (archery, clay launchers) and coordinated the Game Warden and volunteer help. GW Cockrell assisted at Lake Oconee with the annual squirrel hunt at the Georgia Power campground, where new hunters are utilized to control the squirrel population. He assisted with the Buckarama in Perry and the annual state FFA convention in Macon, answering questions from visitors about a host of topics, including Hunter Education. GW Cockrell coordinates Hunter Education in Wilkinson, Jones, and Twiggs counties and distributes CDROM's to libraries and to the public. Congratulations to Game Warden Josh Cockrell, the 2019 Hunter Education Game Warden Instructor of the Year.

## **The Torch Award**

### **Game Warden Ryan Locke – Region II**

*Each year, the Torch Award is presented by the Division to encourage the professional development of a recently appointed Game Warden. Nominees must not have worked as a wildlife enforcement officer for more than five years, have demonstrated a genuine desire to protect the resources and develop professionally, and demonstrate exceptional ability and initiative in the performance of his or her duties, including public education.*



Game Warden Ryan Locke is the 2019 Torch Award recipient. GW Locke is assigned to Lake Lanier/Hall County and he has proven this year that he is a well-rounded Game Warden. Ryan knew he wanted to be a Game Warden in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade when the local warden held an I&E at his school. He pursued his dream and started his career with DNR in 2017. Last year, GW Locke wrote a total of 248 citations and 216 warnings. He investigated 56 complaints and had two assists. During boating season, he logged 59 patrols in 266.5 hours and wrote 130 citations and 88 warnings. GW Locke also made 17 BUI cases, the most in the Region. Additionally, he investigated five boating incidents, one drowning, conducted nine water SARs and assisted with 10 more. Ryan's hunting and fishing enforcement numbers are equally impressive. He conducted 143 hunting license checks and made 141 hunting contacts. He conducted an astounding 310 fishing license checks with 21 assists. His education and public outreach efforts included 35 I&E programs and four Hunter Ed/Development programs. Due to his efforts last year and his outstanding rapport with the community, he was awarded the "2018 John W. Jacobs Award" for excellence in law enforcement by the Gainesville/Hall County Kiwanis Club. Congratulations to Game Warden Ryan Locke, winner of the 2019 Torch Award.

## **Administrative Professional of the Year**

### **Janette, Senior, Administrative Asst. III – Region VII**

Janette Senior is the Division's 2019 Administrative Professional of the Year. Janette has been employed with the Law Enforcement Division for eight years and she daily exemplifies the



Division's mission and core values. She clearly recognizes her role in and sets goals to make sure she exceeds them. Janette maintains the Region's state budget and a Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) budget, maintaining the mountain of paperwork that goes with them. She also monitors the license sales, making sure all monies are accounted for, with no shortcomings. Recently, Janette took on an additional role as the license technician and part-time secretary and, while serving in this role, she identified several areas needing improvement and proposed changes. Upon approval from LED Headquarters and Cash Management in Atlanta, her changes resulted in reduced paperwork and a simpler reporting of license sales. Janette always has a smile on her face and greets each customer warmly and professionally. She always goes out of her way to make a positive impact on the people she serves and the Law Enforcement Division. Congratulations to Janette Senior, the 2019 Administrative Professional of the Year.

## Previous Game Wardens of the Year

William Powell	1980	Rick Sellars	2000
W.D. Hill, Jr.	1981	David Ruddell	2001
Michael Bone	1982	Derek Dillard	2002
William Vickers	1983	Mike Barr	2003
Dan Parrish	1984	Harry E. Akins	2004
Ronald Bailey	1985	Eric Brown	2005
Ralph Sheppard	1986	John Murphy	2006
Roger D. Garrison	1987	Shane Sartor	2007
James McDaniel	1988	Mike Binion	2008
Doug Lewis	1989	Brian Hobbins	2009
Terry West	1990	Cindy Miller	2010
W. Howard Hensley, Jr.	1991	Timothy Butler	2011
Dennis Aderholt	1992	Jason Roberson	2012
Bill Bunch	1993	David Webb	2013
Arvid Edwards	1994	Greg Wade	2014
Mitchell H. Yeargin	1995	Casey Jones	2015
Jeff Weaver	1996	Eddie Tompkins	2016
Mike Commander	1997	Brian Adams	2017
Phillip Scott	1998	Cody Jones	2018
Stanley Elrod	1999		



## Region I- Calhoun (Northwest)



**Front Row – L-R:** AOC Joyce Holland, GW Tyler Lewis, GW Steven Martinez, Sgt. Brooks Varnell (K-9), GW Ryan Shorter, GW Travis Shrader, GWFC Zack Hardy, GW Carla Gann, Cpl. Chad Cox, Sgt. James Keener, GW Frank Pucci, Sgt. Eric Brown, GW Jason Warren, GWFC Mark Moyer, Capt. Mike Burgamy

**Back Row – L-R:** Secretary Sherry Rollins, Sgt. Brian Keener, GW Phillip Stout, GW Ryan Thomas, GA Garrett Pownall, Cpl. Byron Young, GWFC Roger McConkey, GWFC Daniel Gray, GW Brock Hoyt, Cpl. Cody Jones, Cpl. Casey Jones, Cpl. Ben Cunningham, GWFC Russell Epps, GW Kyle Faulknor, Cpl. Shawn Elmore, GW Kalem Burns

**Not Pictured:** Sgt. Mike Barr, Cpl. Bart Hendrix, & K-9 Taz

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, and 2,440 miles of trout streams. Currently, 28 LED Game Wardens provide coverage for the Region.

### **Promotions and Personnel Changes**

Region I welcomed two new Game Wardens:

1. Jason Warren, assigned to Rocky Mountain PFA
2. Kyle Faulknor, assigned to Dade County

Promotions:

Game Warden Carla Gann was promoted to Game Warden 2

Game Warden Tyler Lewis was promoted to Game Warden 2

Game Warden Garrett Pownall was promoted to Game Warden 2

Game Warden Will Smith was promoted to Game Warden 2

Game Warden Ryan Shorter was promoted to Game Warden 2

Game Warden Caleb Thomas was promoted to Game Warden 2

## **Personnel Awards**

Corporal Cody Jones was selected as the 2018 Game Warden of the Year. He also received the Shakir Award from Safari Club International.

Corporal Barton Hendrix received the Region I Boating Safety Officer of the Year Award

Corporal Shawn Elmore received the Region I Investigative Game Warden of the Year Award

## **Operational**



In November 2019, Game Warden Zack Hardy, Cadet Tyler Lewis, and Corporal Byron Young received a complaint of road deer hunting in rural Bartow County. They worked the area with a deer decoy on the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend. Shortly after Cadet Lewis got the decoy positioned in the field, a vehicle stopped in the roadway, the driver rolled down his window, and shot at the decoy. Corporal Young attempted to stop the vehicle and the driver struck the DNR truck while trying to get away. He drove past Corporal Young and Game Warden Hardy began pursuit. The pursuit lasted approximately fifteen minutes and resulted in the suspect being stopped by the Georgia State Patrol who utilized the PITT maneuver. The suspect, who was a life-long poacher with an extensive record, was taken into custody and was

charged with numerous traffic violations as well as hunting from a public road, hunting from a vehicle, obstruction, fleeing and attempting to elude, possession of marijuana, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. He was sentenced to 10 years, serve 4 with the remainder on probation, and \$1,500.00 restitution to DNR.

GW Mark Puig and Sgt. Roberson received a complaint of hunting without permission in an area that a well-known violator had been known to frequent. They located three people hunting without permission. The main violator was in possession of methamphetamine and other narcotics. A search warrant was obtained and served on his residence where more narcotics were located. This arrest was the third time that Sgt. Roberson's unit had arrested this same subject in a 12-month period. Each time resulted in numerous hunting charges as well as felony drug charges and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. This same suspect has since been arrested by the FBI as a part of a multi-agency narcotics investigation.

In December 2018, CPL Bart Hendrix received several complaints of various hunting violations involving three different investigations in Cherokee County. Two investigations were about illegal deer hunting in Northwest Cherokee County and the other involved a poisoning case in Ball Ground. CPL Hendrix was assisted in each of the investigations by every member of his work section in some capacity or another. Work section members worked surveillance looking for suspects at known locations, worked and apprehended two night hunting suspects in the act of night hunting, and reviewed and sorted social media data, warrants, and evidence collection and processing. The poisoning case involved the DNR investigative unit, Cherokee County Fire/EMS, and the USFWS. Several federal charges are pending against the suspect as well as multiple state violations. The other two investigations involved 15 different suspects and over 90 hunting violations were documented. Several deer antlers were confiscated during the investigation as were felony drugs. The cases are currently under review for prosecution.



The Allatoona work section had an amazing year of conservation law enforcement. In addition to numerous great hunting cases, they made 44 arrests this past season for Boating Under the Influence on Allatoona Lake, with at least one or more cases made on each day of the week.



The “Mountain Work Section” was very busy throughout the year with numerous investigations involving deer, bear, turkey, trout, and other wildlife. Wardens Casey Jones, Cody Jones, and James Keener assisted with the GW Academy during firearms, EVOC, ATV operation, active shooter, water survival, and aviation training. Officers also performed and assisted with an array of SAR rescues, extracting victims with a wide range of injuries out of very remote locations in the section. This included carrying out a victim with a broken leg, transporting a victim out using an ATV, an aviation long line rescue of a victim with a broken femur,



and the first aviation rappel rescue of a victim. Many additional rescues were conducted in Whitfield, Murray, Gilmer, and Fannin Counties. Wardens Casey Jones, J. Keener, M. Moyer, T. Shrader, and K. Burns were all deployed to Southwest Georgia Counties after the hurricane in October 2018.



*Sergeant Mike Barr's work unit worked with Parks to get this new Life Jacket Loaner Station installed at Rocky Mountain PFA. The section maintains and stocks the station.*

Cpl. Cody Jones was selected as the 2018 Game Warden of the Year and he also received the Shakir Award from Safari Club International in February 2019. He assisted the GBI and Texas Rangers on three occasions during the year with a murder cold case, TWRA and Indiana DNR with wildlife investigations from those states. Cpl. Jones and Cadet Ryan Thomas caught 6 sets of night hunters in Fannin County throughout hunting season. They were responsible for confiscations of deer, turkey, protected songbirds, trout, convicted felon firearms, and felony drugs on multiple occasions. Cpl. Casey Jones assisted with several drowning recoveries utilizing the sector scan, tow fish sonar, and the ROV. Game Wardens Shrader, Burns, and Moyer also completed several interesting investigations dealing with night deer hunters, convicted felons, hunting without permission, and bear and turkey over bait.



In November and December GWFC Daniel Gray and Game Warden Ryan Shorter assisted Kansas DNR in an investigation. One individual had illegally killed a deer in Kansas and brought it back to Georgia. The investigation resulted in Georgia Game Wardens confiscating the rack of a 140in class buck. The individual was cited for bringing cervid carcass or parts from a CWD positive state and received multiple charges from Kansas DNR.



Throughout deer season Cpl. Chad Cox, Cpl. Brooks Varnell, GWFC Daniel Gray, and Game Wardens Ryan Shorter and Garrett Pownall, utilized game cameras on an affidavit property in Douglas County. This resulted in one confiscation of an 8-point buck and six individuals caught with charges ranging from hunting without permission, hunting over bait, hunting without a license, and hunting without orange.

*Cpl. Brooks Varnell, Cpl. Chad Cox and GWFC Daniel Gray was at the JL Lester Youth Hunt when this lucky hunter got a nice WMA buck.*





Cpl. Chad Cox organized the annual Polk County Kid's Fishing Rodeo. This year's event had 410 kids under the age of 16 registered to fish. Free food, ice cream, drinks, prizes and t-shirts are available to everyone thanks to local sponsors.

In September 2018, Corporal Shawn Elmore received information a convicted felon was hunting deer at night and without permission throughout eastern Gordon County. In December 2018, CPL Elmore and Game Warden First Class Roger McConkey were working a without permission complaint and located the suspect hunting without permission. An investigation ensued and several search warrants were obtained. The investigation revealed the subject had killed 7 bucks in 2018, both at night and without permission with two different stolen firearms. It also was revealed he killed several turkeys on local WMAs with a shotgun as a convicted felon. This poacher was hunting illegally in five northwest Georgia counties. Charges were filed for multiple counts of hunting deer at night, hunting from a motor vehicle, hunting from a public road, hunting without permission, taking over the season bag limit, recording and reporting requirements, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. As of July 2019, he has plead guilty in Gordon County and still has pending cases in several other counties.



Game Wardens Corporal Ben Cunningham and Game Warden Carla Gann were nominated in May 2019 for the Peace Officers Association of Georgia (P.O.A.G.) Valor award by Sergeant Mike Barr for their valent rescue response on the Etowah and Coosa Rivers in June 2018. Both officers assisted in over 100 rescues from water of which ten were critical. The event was sponsored by the Coosa River Basin Initiative (CRBI) and was held after weeks of rain had caused the rivers to exceed the water flow at three times the normal flow rate. Hundreds of people entered the water in attempt to break a world record of the largest number of connected people floating a river. The Game Wardens assisted with medical issues, intoxicated rafters, poor swimmers, people who had lost their life jackets, people near drowning, and people swept downstream beyond their take-out point. P.O.A.G will present the award during a special event.



Corporal Ben Cunningham for recognized for his conservation enforcement by the Tennessee Valley Safari Club International (SCI) during an annual banquet in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

*(left to right) Sergeant Mike Barr, Corporal Ben Cunningham, Georgia Officer of the Year, and wife Starr, Corporal Shawn Elmore and wife Kellie, and Game Warden Carla Gann at the Tennessee Valley Chapter of the SCI Banquet in Chattanooga, Tennessee.*

Georgia Game Wardens set up a recruiting and information center at the Georgia National Fair in Perry, Georgia. Over 500,000 people attended the fair.



Sergeant (SGT.) Mike Barr was detached to Headquarters during much of 2018 for the purpose of recruiting the next generation of Game Wardens. SGT. Barr travelled throughout Georgia, Alabama and North Carolina delivering the Law Enforcement Division message. He worked with DNR Human Resource personnel, teamed up with the Georgia State Patrol recruiters, and direct with higher education facilities and special events. He travelled to universities, colleges, technical schools, career fairs and large gatherings such as the Georgia National Fair in Perry, Georgia. SGT. Barr also assisted several Regions with media stories across the State to help in looking for top regional candidates.



## Region II- Gainesville (Northeast)



Front Row L-R: AAIH Brenda Tanner, Secretary Tasha Lamb, PT Secretary Mckayla Justus, Cpl. Craig Fulghum, GWFC Joe Hill, GW Chris Hall, GWFC David Webb, Sgt. Lee Brown, GWFC Matt Johnson, GW Ryan Locke, GWFC Mitchell Crump, Cpl. Time Vickery, GWFC Brandon Pierce, GWFC Shane Sartor, GWFC Chris Kernahan,  
Back Row L-R: Cpl. Eric Sanders, Sgt. Mike Burgamy, GWFC Kevin Goss, Cpl. Eric Isom, Sgt. Derek Dillard, GWFC Beth Gilbert, GW Jonathan Segars, Cpl. Adam Loudermilk, Cpl. Eddie Tompkins, GWFC Shane Brown, Sgt. Steve Seitz, Cpl. Kevin Dyer, Sgt. Greg Colson, Capt. Johnny Johnson.

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 areas of National Forest lands. The impoundments within Region II receive over 20 million visitors annually while the state parks and WMAs receive another 2.5 Million annually. `

### Promotions and Personnel Changes

Captain Johnny Johnson was promoted to Lt. Colonel  
Captain Stan Elrod Transferred from Region III to Region II  
Game Warden Ryan Cleveland transferred from Region V to Region II  
CPL. Eric Sanders Retired  
Game Warden First Class Mitchell Crump Retired  
Game Warden First Class Kevin Godbee was promoted to Corporal in Region II  
Game Warden Savannah Miller graduated the Game Warden Academy  
Game Warden Bryan Price transferred from Region V to Region II

### Region Personnel Awards

Corporal Eddie Tompkins was selected as the 2018 Region II Investigative Game Warden of the Year  
Game Warden Ryan Locke received the Region II & State Torch Award  
Game Warden Ryan Locke received the Region II Boating Safety Officer of the Year Award  
CPL. Tim Vickery received the Region Game Warden of the Year Award

### **Hunting and Fishing Activity**

In December 2018 Cpl. Eddie Tompkins concluded an investigation of three subjects killing numerous whitetail deer in Gwinnett County. Cpl. Tompkins proved that the three subjects had started killing deer in June and had killed 7 velvet bucks before the season even started. Cpl. Tompkins also proved that once the season started the three kept killing deer. Cpl. Tompkins executed 7 search warrants during the investigation to obtain all the evidence in the case. The investigation lead to 71 arrest warrants being issued in total for offenses such as hunting out of season, hunting without permission, hunting over bait without landowner permission, over the limit of bucks, theft by taking of wildlife, hunting without a license, failure to tag deer, and hunting without hunter education. In total Cpl. Tompkins confiscated 12 Whitetail Deer, 2 crossbows, and several trail cameras. Cpl. Tompkins also proved that one of the subjects had destroyed several velvet buck racks before the search warrants were executed to obtain the evidence.



In November 2018 GWFC Shane Brown received multiple complaints about a possible illegally killed buck in Lumpkin County. GWFC Brown finally was able to obtain a trail camera video showing the buck alive after dark the night before it was killed. The buck showed up at the deer processor at daylight and the individuals stated they killed it the night before but couldn't find it till late. Cpl. Eddie Tompkins and GWFC Brown went to the residence to interview the subjects separately. One subject admitted he killed the buck at approximately 3:00 AM off his back deck and that it was also his third buck. The subject received three charges. Lumpkin County Probate Court ordered him to pay \$1132.00 and suspended his hunting privileges for two years.



On December 17, 2018, GWFC Brandon Pierce received a small amount of information on a suspect that supposedly had killed over the limit of antlered deer. GWFC Pierce started the investigation into the matter soon after the call. As GWFC Pierce dug into the case, more information began to appear. GWFC Pierce asked Cpl. Tim Vickery to assist with the



investigation. Over the next couple of days several avenues were taken to get the needed evidence to interview the suspect. Then, on December 22, 2018, GWFC Pierce ended the investigation and with the assistance of Sgt. Derek Dillard and Cpl. Vickery, interviewed the suspect. During the interview the suspect confessed to the matter. As a result, four violations were documented. The violations consisted of failure to record deer harvest and taking over the season limit of antlered deer. GWFC Pierce seized two eleven-point buck racks, an eight point buck rack, and a nine

point buck rack that was intended to be mounted. All for evidentiary purposes.

Cpl. Adam Loudermilk and Game Warden Jeffery Turner, hosted the sixteenth annual Banks County youth deer hunt. More than twenty kids participated this year on Banks County property and the hunt yielded nearly 100% success rate. This hunt continues to provide for an outstanding chance to develop close personal relationships with sportsmen and women of the area, and provides an opportunity to hunt for some children who otherwise would not have such an opportunity.

Lake Chatuge in Towns County hosted the 2018 national B.A.S.S. Elite Series Angler of the Year Championship in September of 2018. The top 50 anglers in the national B.A.S.S. Elite Series participated in the event which drew large crowds to the area. Sgt. Steve Seitz, Sgt. Mike Barr, Cpl. Anne Wiley, Cpl. Kevin Dyer, GWFC David Webb, and GWFC Beth Gilbert patrolled the lake and manned a DNR Law Enforcement Division booth during the 5 day event.

In December 2018 Cpl. Eddie Tompkins and Sgt. Lee Brown responded to a call in South Forsyth County of possible illegal hunting. The complainant stated he had heard several shots from a high powered rifle come from the adjoining property just after daylight. South Forsyth County is only open to hunt deer with archery, muzzle loader, or shotgun. Once on scene Cpl. Tompkins saw a subject exiting the woods in full camo with no fluorescent orange vest. As soon as the subject saw Cpl. Tompkins he turned and ran back into the woods. Cpl. Tompkins gave chase. While chasing after the subject that ran he located two additional subjects both of which were hunting without fluorescent orange and one with a high powered rifle. Sgt. Brown was able to secure those two hunters and Cpl. Tompkins returned to tracking the subject that initially ran. While tracking the subject Cpl. Tompkins saw a subject trying to hide in a blown down tree. When the subject saw Cpl. Tompkins approaching he got up and ran. Cpl. Tompkins was able to apprehend that hunter. That hunter had hid his rifle which was later located by DNR K-9 Colt and his handler Cpl. Eric Isom. The original subject was not located, however a 10 point buck that he had shot with a rifle was located. Later his rifle and other personal items were found hidden in the bushes. Later that night Game Wardens and deputies from the Barrow County Sheriff's Office attempted to locate the hunter that originally absconded at his residence. He was not located however several fresh deer heads were located. Cpl. Tompkins obtained a search warrant for the property and located six additional bucks that had recently been shot. In total Cpl. Tompkins took 26 arrest warrants for the subject that was not located. The three subjects that were located were issued a total of 15 citations. Cpl. Tompkins seized seven bucks as evidence.



On Monday December 31<sup>st</sup> 2018, Corporal Tim Vickery and Game Warden Jonathan Segars finished up a month long investigation into an illegal hunting complaint. In August 2018, Cpl. Vickery received information that a subject had killed a deer illegally during the previous season. The information Cpl. Vickery received was that the subject had no licenses and was possibly a convicted felon. After investigating, Cpl. Vickery confirmed that the subject had no license, but the reason was because he had his hunting privileges suspended for failure to pay child support. Throughout the season Cpl. Vickery and GW Segars tried to catch the subject in the act of hunting with no success. It was later found that the subject had been in an accident and had not hunted during the current deer season. On December 30<sup>th</sup>, after gathering additional information from social media, Cpl. Vickery and GW Segars went to the subject's residence to talk to him about the



deer he had killed. The subject was not home. However, the Game Wardens spoke to the subject's wife and told her to have the subject call them. On December 31<sup>st</sup>, Cpl. Vickery and GW Segars were finishing up another complaint in Toccoa when they noticed the subject's vehicle at an intersection with the road they were traveling on. Corporal Vickery turned around and attempted to get the tag number to ensure that it was the subject they were looking for. When he did, however, the subject fled. Corporal Vickery and GW Segars managed to keep the subject in sight but did not pursue him with blue lights on through town. They followed the subject down a couple of roads and lost contact at one point, but picked the vehicle up again as it doubled back to where it came from. At that point turned Cpl. Vickery turned on his blue lights and siren to stop the vehicle. It continued through a residential area, running a stop sign before finally coming to a stop. The subject was

removed from the vehicle and placed under arrest. The subject admitted to killing the deer the previous year while his hunting privileges were suspended. He also stated that he had talked to his wife that morning and that he knew the Game Warden was after him, and that he had run after seeing them pass by him. The vehicle was searched and a .45 caliber handgun was secured, along with a .308 caliber rifle. The Game Wardens were then advised by the subject's passenger that the subject had a glass pipe in his hand that he had thrown out the window right before they had stopped. The Game Wardens went to the area where the passenger had indicated and found two glass pipes containing a white residue, which was suspected to be methamphetamine. The vehicle was released to the passenger and the subject was transported to the Stephens County Jail. It was determined that the subject was not a convicted felon. After talking to the District Attorney, warrants were taken and the subject was charged with Violation of Georgia Controlled Substance Act (Felony), two counts of Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony (Felony), Possession of Drug Related Objects, Fleeing and Attempting to Elude Police Officer, Failure to Stop at Stop Sign, Hunting While Privileges Suspended, Possession of Illegally Taken Wildlife, and Littering. The deer was confiscated for evidentiary purposes.

## **Other Activity**

Game Wardens from across the state were called upon to assist with Super Bowl LIII at Mercedes Benz Stadium and on the campus of the Georgia World Congress Center. Sgt. Lee Brown led a team of 30 Game Wardens that assisted with perimeter security and check point security. Game Wardens were assigned to the detail for a total of 10 days.

On June 11, 2019, Game Warden Jeffery Turner, Cpl. Anne Wiley and White County Sheriff's Office investigated a trespassing complaint on one of the DNR Law Enforcement affidavit properties located on Dukes Creek off Highway 75 in Sautee Nacoochee, GA. GW Turner received information that people were dredging for gold in Dukes Creek using machinery in the creek. The area is historically known for the discovery of gold in 1829 where a merchant purchased and shipped 1 to 1.5 million dollars-worth of gold in a thirty-year period. GW Turner made contact with five adults who were running the active dredging operation. The dredging machinery included a generator, gas, gas lines, suction tubes, float apparatus, suction apparatus and containers worth over \$3,000.00. The landowner wanted the adults prosecuted for damaging the trout stream habitat that he has under an application for creek restoration with the Environmental Protection Agency. GW Turner and Cpl. Wiley cited the five adults for criminal trespass. White County Sheriff Deputies assisted with the investigation.

On March 16, 2019, Cpl. Anne Wiley and GWFC Chad Chambers responded to a boating incident where two bass boats collided on Lake Chatuge right after a bass fishing tournament launched at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds Boat ramp. The two bass boats were traveling towards each other on the lake and Vessel I turned into Vessel II's course, causing Vessel II to strike Vessel I. The operator of Vessel I was directly struck by the hull of Vessel II and was pronounced deceased at the scene by Towns County Coroner. The passenger in Vessel I received suspected minor injuries and was transported to Northeast Medical Center. The operator and passenger of Vessel II were uninjured. Cpl. Anne Wiley and Cpl. Bart Hendrix were the CIRT investigators for this incident.



## Region III- Thomson (East Central)



**First Row:** CAPT Stan Elrod, SGT Max Boswell, GW Nolan Callaway, GW Chris Adkins, GW John Rhodes, CPL Jeff Billips, CPL Brian Adams.

**Second Row:** SGT John Harwell, GW Noah Osborne, CPL Ricky Boles, GWFC Jason Harrison, CPL Derrell Worth, CPL Ryan Swain.

**Third Row:** GWFC Mark Stephens, GWFC Dan Schay, CPL Tim Butler, SGT Matt Garthright, CPL Ben Payne, SGT Doyte Chaffin.

**Fourth Row:** CPL Mark Patterson, RFC Bobby Timmerman, SGT Brian Carter, RFC Phillip Nelson.

**Inset:** AACIII Elizabeth Bentley, Part time Secretary Shelby Patterson. Not Shown Is GW Trae Paulk

The Region III Law Enforcement Division is comprised of twenty-one counties in East Central Georgia. Within the region, there are twenty Wildlife Management Areas, four State Parks, one Public Fishing Area, one Public Dove Field, one Voluntary Public Hunting access area, Clarks Hill Lake, Lake Russell, Lake Oconee, Savannah River, Ogeechee River, Oconee River, Apalachee River, and the Ohoopie river. Twenty-eight post certified Game Wardens and one Administrative Assistant are assigned to the region.

### Personnel Changes

- Sergeant Doyte Chaffin was promoted to region Captain following the transfer of Captain Stan Elrod to Region II.
- Sergeant Brian Hobbins transferred from Region VI to Region III to fill Sergeant Chaffins' position.
- Region III welcomed three new Game Wardens during 2018, Saxon Campbell assigned to McDuffie County, Jared Wood assigned to Warren County, and Kyle McDade assigned to Jefferson County.
- Region III also welcomed transfers Mark Stephens to Clarke County and Shane Sartor to Elbert County.

- CPL Julian Wilkins retired after faithfully serving the Law Enforcement Division for 27 years.
- GWFC Tim Butler and Ricky Boles were promoted to Corporal within their work units.

### **Specialized Training**

- Game Wardens Noah Osborne and John Rhodes completed Sonar/ROV Operator Training.
- CPL Brian Adams completed Digital Forensic Analysis, Florida Fish & Wildlife Venomous and
- Conditional Reptile, and FTO training.
- GWFC Dan Schay completed Honor Guard, IHEA Academy, and FTO training.
- CPL Mark Patterson completed Firearms Instructor Training.
- Captain Doyte Chaffin graduated from DNR Leadership Academy and the FBI LEEDS.
- CPL Jeff Billips completed Semi-Auto Pistol 2 Training.

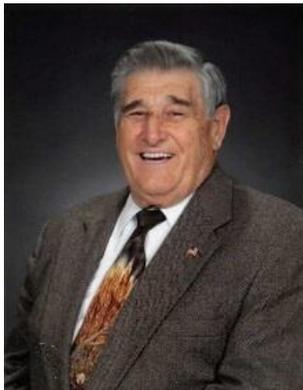
### **New Equipment**



Region III received one new patrol boat this year. This boat is assigned to Columbia County and will be utilized to assist with calls on rivers within the region.

### **Passing of Retired Game Wardens**

Captain Jimmy Steptoe passed away on September 12, 2018 following failing health. CPT Steptoe formerly served as Captain over Region III.



CPL Ronnie Thomaston passed away on August 10, 2018 following failing health. CPL Thomaston last served as the Warren County Game Warden



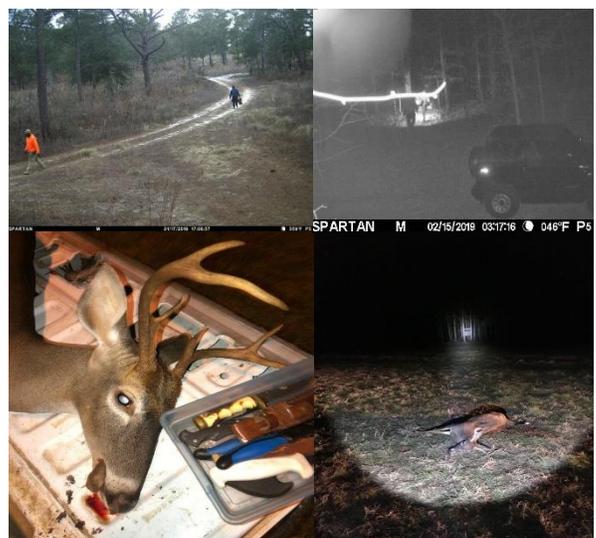
### **SGT Max Boswell's Work Unit**

Sergeant Boswell's work unit serves five counties and are patrolled by the following Game Wardens: CPL Jeffrey Billips/Burke County, GW Kyle McDade/Jefferson County, CPL Ben Payne/Richmond County, and GW Trae Paulk/Johnson and Washington Counties. Within this work unit are six WMA's, Hamburg State Park, and the following rivers: Savannah, Ogeechee, Oconee, and Ohoopie. During 2018 these Game Wardens responded to 223 complaints, completed 9 SAR's Cases, patrolled State owned properties 482 times, conducted 46 water patrols, checked 752 boats and 1729 licenses. Notable cases include a long-term fishing without permission case being resolved, an artifact digging case and several hunting without permission cases, one of which led to the arrest of a convicted felon. The convicted felon was charged with possession of firearm by convicted felon, hunting without harvest record, hunting without permission, failure to record big game harvest, and hunting with an illegal weapon.

### **SGT Brian Carter's Work unit**

Sergeant Carter's work unit serves five counties and are patrolled by the following Game Wardens: CPL Tim Butler/Oconee County, GWFC Shane Sartor/Elbert County, RFC Philip Nelson/Oglethorpe County, CPL Mark Patterson/Wilkes County, and GWFC Mark Stephens/Clarke County. Within this work unit is Clarks Hill Lake, Lake Russell, Richard B. Russell State Park, and three WMA's. During 2018 these Game Wardens responded to 156 complaints, completed 1 SAR Case, patrolled State owned properties 699 times, conducted 76 water patrols, checked 415 boats and 1717 licenses. Notable cases included:

- The Clarks Hill WMA in Wilkes County was hit hard by persons stealing firewood and creating their own road system through the woods to load and haul it off. The Spartan Camera system was deployed. Three groups were caught resulting in 16 violator contacts for Criminal Trespass and Driving in Unauthorized Areas on a WMA.
- Seven groups of night deer hunters and one group of daytime road hunters were apprehended across Clarke, Elbert, Oconee, Oglethorpe, and Wilkes Counties (at least one group was caught in every county in the section). This resulted in 23 subjects being charged, two of which were convicted felons. Two more groups were stopped for shining, which resulted in seven subjects being warned for Blinding Wildlife. Additionally, two more convicted felons were pulled off dove fields, one of which was on the Lower Broad River WMA public field.

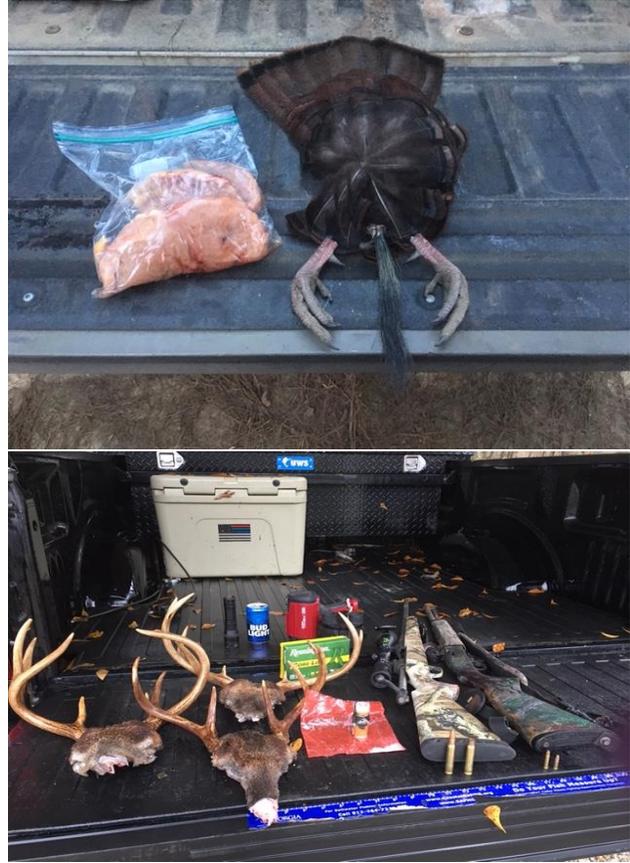


- Traps were located on four different properties – two in Taliaferro County and two in Oconee County. Five trappers were checked resulting in seven violator contacts ranging from trapping out of season (2) and Failure to Tag Traps (2) to Trapping Without Permission.

### **SGT Doyte Chaffin's Work Unit**

SGT Chaffin's work unit serves five counties, Clarks Hill Lake, Savannah River, McDuffie PFA, Elijah Clark State Park, Mistletoe State Park and five WMA's. The following Game Wardens patrol these areas: CPL Brian Adams/Glascock County, GW Chris Adkins/Columbia County, GW Saxon Campbell/McDuffie County, GW Noah Osborne/Elijah Clark State Park, GW Jared Wood/Warren County, CPL Ryan Swain/Lincoln County, RFC Bobby Timmerman/Clarks Hill Lake/Columbia County. Game Wardens Noah Osborne and Chris Adkins graduated from the 32<sup>nd</sup> Game Warden Academy. Noah served as the class Chaplain and Chris received the Wildlife Award. Jared Wood and Saxon Campbell graduated from the 33<sup>rd</sup> Game Warden Academy. Jared served as the class PT instructor and Saxon served as the class Chaplain. GWFC Bobby Timmerman was recognized as the Boating Safety officer of the year for Region III. During 2018 these Game Wardens responded to 145 complaints, completed 19 SAR cases, patrolled State properties 691 times, conducted 206 water patrols, checked 1622 boats and 2206 licenses. Notable cases included several night hunting cases which led to arrests, hunting turkey over bait, hunting on closed WMA's, hunting without permission cases, and a pending RICO Case involving a Taxidermy Operation.



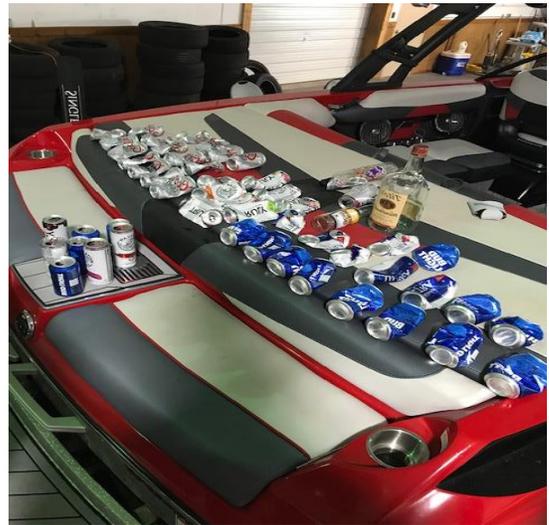


**SGT Matt Garthright's Work Unit**

Sergeant Garthright's work unit serves five counties and is patrolled by the following Game Wardens: Cpl. Derrell Worth/Greene County, Cpl. Ricky Boles/Morgan County, GWFC Dan Schay/Newton County, GWFC Jason Harrison/Walton County, GW John Rhodes/Hancock County, and GW Nolan Callaway/Greene County Lake Oconee BS. In addition, this work unit is responsible for providing law enforcement on Oconee, Redlands, Walton Dove Field, and Gaither WMAs along with Hard Labor Creek State Park. During 2018, these Game Wardens responded to 331 complaints, completed 16 Search and Rescues, logged 553 state land patrols, checked 4428 resource user licenses and 2309 boats, and patrolled state waterways 209 times.

Sergeant Garthright's work unit had many accomplishments over the last year. Ricky was promoted to Corporal. John graduated the 32<sup>nd</sup> Game Warden Academy and transferred to Hancock County. Nolan transferred into the work section as our Greene County/Lake Oconee BS Game Warden. Derrell represented Region III as their NWTF Game Warden of the year and received the State NWTF Award. Dan was recognized as Region III Game Warden of the Year, Waterfowl Officer of the Year, and Investigative Officer of the Year. Dan also joined the DNR Honor Guard and became a Field Training Officer.

Enforcement patrols on Lake Oconee continue to be more challenging for this work unit as the boat traffic continues to increase year after year. Sergeant Garthright's work unit responded to 7 boating incidents, 2 of which were fatalities and three drownings. While on patrol, Game Wardens arrested 14 individuals for boating under the influence of alcohol.



This work unit saw an increase of without permission complaints this year as well. Game Wardens worked these complaints and contacted many individuals hunting without permission. These complaints led to numerous other violations to include: Possession of firearm by convicted felon, hunting while privileges suspended, theft by taking, hunting without license, hunting without orange, hunting turkeys over bait, obstruction, and felony drug charges.



Turkey season was notable for Sergeant Garthright's work unit. Game wardens in the section apprehended 23 individuals hunting turkeys over bait and several hunting without permission. One gobbler was also confiscated on opening day of the season.

Game Wardens in Sergeant Garthright's section were actively involved in their communities. They participated in programs across the section. These programs let others meet their local game wardens and are a great way for the group to have good positive contacts with the public. The programs included: recruitment opportunities, career day events, wild game suppers, Jr. Deputy Camp, youth deer and youth squirrel hunts, NWTF Jake's day events and banquets, public safety days, hunter safety, and boater safety courses.



## Region IV- Macon (West Central)



Front row l-r: AA3 Kim Cato, Ethan Franklin, Cpl. Keith Waddell, Cpl. Keith Page, Charlie Follin, Sgt. Jeremy Bolen, Cpl. Tony Wynne, Sgt. Travis Sweat, Jessica Spencer, Sgt. Brent Railey, Secretary Debbie Stephens.

Second row l-r: Sgt. Bo Kelly, Cpl. Wil Smith, David Fisher, Russell Epps, Cpl. Mitch Oliver, Ken Lalumiere, Josh Cockrell, Steven Martinez.

Third row l-r: Kevin Hurley, Jason Bennett, Cpl. Freddie Hays, Lamar Burns, Cpl. Robert Stillwell, Dean Gibson, Cpl. Kevin Godbee, Cpl. Lynn Stanford.

Fourth row l-r: Zachary Griffis, Capt. Chris Hodge, Sgt. Tony Fox



Due to the promotion of Lt. Wanda Roberts to Headquarters, Sgt. Tony Fox was selected to fill the position in the Region IV Office as Administrative Sgt. Sgt. Fox served as a field supervisor for 14 years and will now oversee office staff, administrative duties, and assist with the Region budget.

Sergeant Bolen'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 7 Wildlife Management Areas, 1 Public Fishing Area, and 1 State Park. Game Wardens assigned to this work unit are Cpl. Mitch Oliver, Cpl. Josh Swain, GWFC David Fisher, Game Warden Lamar Burns, Game Warden Ethan Franklin, and Game Warden Dean Gibson.



In November of 2018, Cpl. Oliver and Game Warden Dean Gibson were patrolling for hunting activity. They located a truck parked in an area which is usually known for fishing and not hunting activity. After checking the area for fishing and not locating anyone, they decided to check the city property for hunting activity. Cpl. Oliver located a hunter whom he has an extensive history with for violating hunting laws. Cpl. Oliver eventually located 3 hunters who were out illegally hunting on the city property. All 3 subjects received various hunting citations to include license violations, hunting without fluorescent orange, and hunting without permission.

In March of 2019, Cpl. Swain and GWFC Fisher responded to a turkey hunting without permission complaint. Cpl. Swain located and collected evidence including the shot pellets which were in a tree over the property line. The evidence was critical in tying the suspect back to the crime scene. After completing the investigation, a hunter was issued a citation for hunting turkeys without permission and this was mainly due to the thoroughness that Cpl. Swain put into the case.



Game Warden First Class David Fisher is assigned to Crawford County. He was named the Region 4 Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Game Warden of the Year and the Region 4 Game Warden of the Year. GWFC Fisher teaches Cultural awareness, ATV instruction, and Boating EVOC instruction at the Game Warden academy. GWFC Fisher was also responsible for field training a new cadet Game Warden from the last academy class.



In February of 2019, GWFC David Fisher worked with a group of local high school students to assist in building wood duck boxes. GWFC Fisher then worked with local Game Management staff to place the wood duck boxes out on local WMA's to improve local waterfowl habitat.

In March of 2019, Game Warden Lamar Burns and GWFC David Fisher responded to a request from local Law Enforcement. The agency was performing a search warrant and a live alligator was located during the search. Game Wardens responded to the residence and Game Warden Burns issued the subject a citation for the violation. The alligator was transported to a permitted facility and turned over.



Game Warden Ethan Franklin is currently assigned to Talbot County. Game Warden Franklin received the Region 4 Investigative Game Warden of the Year Award and the Region 4 Torch Award.

In September of 2018, Game Warden Franklin was notified about a large quantity of blue crabs that were dumped into the Chattahoochee River in Columbus. Game Warden diligently followed up the complaint and located the individual who was responsible for dumping the crabs. During the investigation, a local seafood market was also found to be in violation of several seafood market permit violations.

Game Warden Dean Gibson is assigned to FDR State Park/Harris County. Game Warden Gibson graduated the DNR Academy in October of 2018 and he completed FTO training in January of 2019.

In August of 2018, K-9 Ruger was utilized to search for firearms that were used during a murder in Meriwether County. After a brief search, Ruger located 2 of the 3 firearms that Deputies were looking for. The firearms were collected and turned over as evidence.



In October of 2018, K-9 Ruger unexpectedly passed away. During his 8 1/2 years of service, he assisted numerous Game Wardens with locating evidence, finding hunters, and presenting demonstrations for various groups.



Sgt. Brent Railey's work unit encompasses the northwest area of Region IV. His unit consists of Heard, Troup, Coweta, Meriwether, Pike, Spalding, Fayette, Clayton, and Henry Counties. Cpl. Keith Waddel and Cpl. Keith Page, along with K-9 Rio, assist Sgt. Railey with supervisory duties in this work unit. Game Wardens Russell Epps, Ken Lalumiere, Charles Follin, and Steven Martinez are also assigned to this work unit.

In October of 2018, Game Warden Russell Epps was requested by the Troup County Sheriff's Office to assist with a search warrant on a residence in November of 2018. Deputies had located what they believed to be illegal wildlife parts on the premises. While there, the homeowner drove up with a Mule deer in his truck from Colorado which is a CWD state. The deer was taken out of the truck to be destroyed because of the chance it was positive for CWD. While confiscating the deer deputies found several large bags of marijuana stuffed inside the body cavity of the deer.



Game Wardens Keith Waddell, Ethan Franklin, Zack Griffis, Josh Swain, Russell Epps, Charlie Follin, Ken Lalumiere, Keith Page, Captain Chris Hodge, Major Doc Watson, Steven Martinez and Sgt. Brent Railey assisted Columbus Police with a large-scale grid search for a missing person on the Troup/Heard County line on West Point WMA.

On Saturday May 18 GW Russell Epps, GW Charlie Follin and Sgt Brent Railey responded to a vessel fire on West Point Lake at Sunny Point Access in Troup County. Upon arrival they found a ski boat fully engulfed in flames. GW Epps and Follin put two LaGrange Firefighters on their patrol boat and were able to get the fire under control enough to tow it to shore and fully extinguish the flames.



In October of 2018 Sergeant Travis Sweat became the supervisor for the work unit that covers Butts, Jasper, Lamar, Monroe, and Upson Counties. Included in this work unit are Lake Jackson, Lake Juliette, High Falls Lake, the Ocmulgee River, the Towaliga River, the Flint River, High Falls State Park, Indian Springs State Park, Rum Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Clybel WMA, Sprewell Bluff WMA, Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center, Marben Farm PFA, and Camp Thunder hunting area. The work unit consisted of three officers: Corporal Wil Smith, Corporal Tony Wynne, and Game Warden First Class Jessica (Niki) Spencer. Game Warden First Class Keith Page (with K-9 Reno) was promoted to Corporal in SGT. Brent Railey's section, Game Warden Zach Griffis lateral transferred to McIntosh County, and Game Warden First Class Fred Hays retired.

In May of 2018 CPL Wynne attended and taught firearms safety at the Charlie Elliott Keeping GA Wild outdoor event. CPL Wynne was able to pass on safe gun handling techniques to countless individuals. Due to his efforts and commitment these individual, some of which having never fired a firearm, are now up and coming sportsmen.





In January of 2019, SGT Sweat’s work section responded to a suicide call on High Falls State Park. The entire work section, as well as several others in DNR LE, worked the incident. The LE Division, coupled with the State Parks SAR team, worked together to bring the incident to a close quickly to help give the family closure.



Sgt. James “Bo” Kelly’s work unit covers 8 counties in middle Georgia including Putnam, Baldwin, Jones, Wilkinson, Twiggs, Houston, Bleckley and Pulaski county. This work unit also includes Lake Sinclair, a 15,500 acre Georgia Power impoundment. The work unit currently consists of 8 Game Wardens.

During the last year, 4 newly hired Game Wardens joined the work unit. Game Warden Kevin Hurley was assigned to Twiggs County. Game Warden Jason Bennett transferred into Bleckley County. Game Warden Erin Mcdade was assigned Baldwin County. Game Warden Evan Nobles was assigned to Pulaski County. The former Bleckley County Game Warden Ronnie Beard retired during this period.



Work unit Game Wardens investigated numerous complaints/calls during this period. Violations of hunting/fishing without permission, hunting deer at night, hunting/boating under the influence, and several Wildlife Management Area violations were documented.



Game Wardens patrolled Lake Sinclair during the year responding to and investigating 6 boating incidents. Our work unit arrested 13 boat operators for boating under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. We maintain two patrol boats on Lake Sinclair for law enforcement/search and rescue patrols. Work units from Lake Oconee and Lake Sinclair attended the annual Georgia Power lake safety meeting to address law enforcement problems and concerns on both lakes.

Game Wardens were deployed to South Georgia in response to Hurricane Irma, which caused significant damage to the Albany area. Our work unit deployed four Game Wardens to open roads for emergency calls and conducting search and rescue operations.



## Region V- Albany (Southwest)



(L-R) Steve Robinson, Scott Carroll, Phillip Stout, Quinn Fogle, Clint Martin, Tony Cox, Bryan Price, Taylor Brown, Al Greer, Steve Thomas, Logan South, Brock Hoyt, Kristie Carpenter, Jesse Harrison, David Ruddell, David Jones, Tommy Daughtrey, Cindy Hynote, Eric White, Ellis Wynn, Jim Atchley, DNR Chaplin Daryl Brown, Rick Sellars. Front kneeling: Greg Wade and Trigg. Not shown are Levi Thompson, Greg Castelli, Drew Beverly, Stetson Stevens and Blake Chafin.

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, a multitude of smaller streams, thirteen wildlife management areas, seven state parks, Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, and Ft. Benning Military Base.

Currently, the region has twenty-six POST certified game wardens, with twenty-four 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 a vacant secretary position.



*From (L-R):* Captain Rick Sellars, Secretary Shannon Boyd, AOC Cindy Hynote and Sergeant Ellis Wynn.

***The region's twenty-nine counties are divided into four work units:***

The Lake Blackshear Unit consists of Sergeant Al Greer, Corporal Clint Martin, Corporal Jesse Harrison, Game Wardens Logan South, Stetson Stevens and Blake Chafin.

This year five Wardens were added to this unit, Logan South, Dean Gibson, and Bryan Price graduated from the 32<sup>nd</sup> academy. Warden Dean Gibson transferred to Region IV, and Warden Bryan Price transferred to Region II. In June Wardens Blake Chafin and Stetson Stevens, joined this section after completing the 33<sup>rd</sup> academy. The work section spent over 600 hours working citizen complaints this year. There were two boating incidents with only property damage, three hunting incidents, and one drowning in the work section. The section charged six people for hunting deer at night and charged three subjects with possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.



*From L-R: Corporal Clint Martin, Logan South, Sergeant Al Greer, and Corporal Jesse Harrison. Inset: Blake Chafin and Stetson Stevens*

The Lake Worth Unit consists of Sergeant David Ruddell, Corporal Greg Wade, Corporal Tommy Daughtrey, Game Warden First Class Eric White, Wardens David Jones and Kristie Carpenter.

The wardens addressed 140 complaints in the work unit, documented 695 violations, performed 1,184 license checks, 468 boat inspections (45 patrols on the water), performed 242 patrols on state owned lands and responded to 29 SAR's calls. Notable activity in the work unit included; charging numerous subjects for hunting ducks over bait on six baited ponds and one after-hours roost shoot; one group of night deer hunters; seven individuals hunting turkey over bait; two subjects for taking over the season-limit of antlered deer; two subjects for buying/selling wildlife; three subjects for hunting on closed WMA's; and two BUI arrests. The wardens investigated two hunting incidents involving subjects who fell from tree stands and conducted search/recovery operations on eight drownings. Wildlife and boating safety patrols also produced seven felony arrests of felons with firearms and possession of Schedule I drugs. Game Wardens assisted investigators from the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission with a high-profile bear hunting investigation that involved a resident of Colquitt County. A pre-dawn raid to serve arrest and search warrants on the subject resulted in his extradition to Florida for: Racketeering (1<sup>st</sup> degree felony), Animal Fighting or Baiting (3<sup>rd</sup> degree felony), three counts of Animal Cruelty (3<sup>rd</sup> degree

felony), Littering (3<sup>rd</sup> degree felony), Unlawful Use of a Two-Way Communication Device (3<sup>rd</sup> degree felony), and Unlawful Taking of a Black Bear (2<sup>nd</sup> degree misdemeanor).



*From L-R: GWFC Eric White, GW David Jones, Sergeant David Ruddell, Corporal Greg Wade, Corporal Tommy Daughtrey. Inset: Kristie Carpenter.*

The Lake Seminole Unit consists of Sergeant Tony Cox, Corporal Steve Thomas, Corporal Quinn Fogle, Wardens Ryan Cleveland, Taylor Brown, Drew Beverly and Gregory Castelli.

Sgt. Cox and his group spent four hundred and twelve hours working a total of 67 complaints. Investigations into these complaints lead to the arrest of 35 persons for offences that included fishing and hunting without permission, night deer hunting, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, possession of meth-amphetamine, possession of marijuana, hunting alligators out of season, and the possession of wildlife without a permit. The wardens arrested seven groups of night hunters that consisted of seventeen individuals, flagged three dove fields, shut down and cited hunters on two baited dove fields and confiscated eight illegally taken bucks. During waterfowl season sixty two violator contacts were made for waterfowl hunting violations. The wardens apprehended hunters on one baited duck pond and three after hours roost shoots and confiscated numerous ducks. They worked six reportable boating incidents that resulted in three injuries and a fatality and had eight BUI arrests on the combined waters of Lake Seminole, Spring Creek and the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers.



*From L-R: Corporal Quinn Fogle, Corporal Steve Thomas, Ryan Cleveland, Taylor Brown and Sergeant Tony Cox. Inset: Drew Beverly and Gregory Castelli*

The Lake Walter F. George Unit consists of Sergeant Jim Atchley, Corporal Scott Carroll, Corporal Steve Robinson, Wardens

Philip Stout and Brock Hoyt. During the past year three new wardens were added to this work section, Brock Hoyt, Philip Stout and Levi Thompson. Quinn Fogle was promoted to Corporal in Early County under Sergeant Tony Cox.

The work unit documented 497 violator contacts. Wardens Carroll and Fogle arrested twenty-seven subjects for BUI, Hoyt and Stout have one BUI each for a total of twenty-nine in the section. Corporals Carroll and Robinson arrested two subjects for HUI. Nine deer were confiscated for violations including hunting deer at night, over the season bag limit and hunting out of season. The work section conducted over 630 patrols on state owned lands to keep visitors safe and Corporal Steve Robinson has been diligent, conducting 328 of these patrols on Florence Marina and Providence Canyon State Park along with patrols on Hannahatchee Creek WMA and Lannahassee VPA. Corporals Carroll and Robinson assisted in teaching during the current Game Warden Academy and serve as training officers for our new wardens.



*From L-R: Phillip Stout, Brock Hoyt, Corporal Scott Carrol, Sergeant Jim Atchley, Corporal Steve Robinson and Levi Thompson.*

***Region V staff were recognized for their work throughout the year:***

During FY 2019 Corporal Quinn Fogle was selected for the 2018 Darnell Award, 2018 Investigative Award, and the 2018 Boating Safety Award. Cpl. Fogle was selected as the 2018 Boating Safety Game Warden of the Year for his outstanding work in the area of boating safety. Cpl. Fogle dedicated over 200 hours of effort towards providing the public with a safe environment on the waters in and around Lake Seminole, Flint River, Lake George, and the Chattahoochee River. Cpl. Fogle had 75 boating violator contacts and assisted with 25 BUI's. He was also selected for the 2018 Investigative Award following a three-month long investigation in Early County that resulted over 89 charges on 10 subjects charged for multiple wildlife violations. The wildlife violations consisted of hunting deer at night, hunting alligators out of season, hunting from a public road, hunting without licenses, and hunting with a motor vehicle.

Eric White was selected as the 2018 Hunter Education Instructor of the Year.

Game Warden Kristie Carpenter received two awards during her P.O.S.T. training. The *Community Service* award was in recognition for her project that resulted in the donations of 100 “Journey Bags” to the Monroe County DFCS center for children and families. The *Most Determined in Physical Fitness* award was in recognition as being the most improved in physical fitness over the course of the entire Game Warden Academy. Carpenter was also presented with the Class Flag for P.O.S.T. Session 68 as being a competitor in every area and demonstrating the “spirit of the class”.

### ***Region V personnel changes this year:***

Quinn Fogle promoted to Corporal in Early County.

Steve Thomas was promoted to Corporal in Grady County.

Sgt. Bob Holley was promoted to Captain in the training unit.

Corporal Tony Cox was promoted to Sergeant of the Lake Seminole Unit.

David Jones, Philip Stout, Ryan Cleveland and Logan South were promoted to Ranger II.

Bryan Price transferred to Region II.

Dean Gibson transferred to Region IV.

Eric White transferred from Thomas County to Colquitt County.

David Jones transferred from Colquitt to Thomas County.

Secretary Shannon Boyd left the agency to pursue other interests.

The Law Enforcement Division was fortunately able to hire additional game wardens throughout the state this year, with Region V receiving five new game wardens. These five wardens completed POST basic training and the 33<sup>rd</sup> Game Warden Academy in June and have reported to their assigned counties.

Levi Thompson-Webster County

Drew Beverly-Mitchell County

Stetson Stevens-Sumter County

Blake Chafin-Turner County

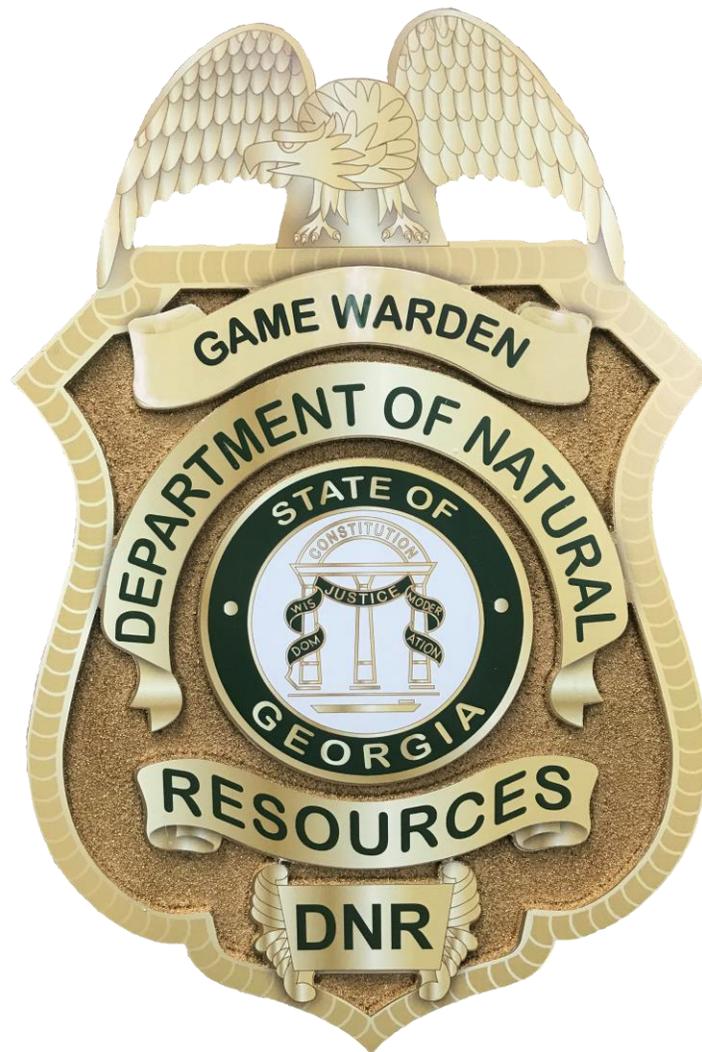
Gregory Castelli- Miller County

### ***Hurricane Michael***

Hurricane Michael was the first Category 5 hurricane to strike the United States since Andrew in 1992 and the fourth strongest land falling hurricane in the contiguous United States in terms of wind speed. It became a tropical depression on October 7<sup>th</sup>, a hurricane on the 8<sup>th</sup> and reached major hurricane status on the 9<sup>th</sup> in the Gulf of Mexico. As a Category 5 hurricane with 160 mph winds, it made landfall at Mexico Beach Florida devastating the coastal area with a fourteen foot storm surge. It then tracked northeastward across the panhandle of Florida and entered Georgia around Donalsonville with winds in excess of 100 mph being experienced as far north as Albany. The eye passed directly through Region V and within twelve hours of landfall it had moved across the state and was downgraded to a tropical storm as it moved into the Carolinas on October 11<sup>th</sup>. Seventy four lives were lost due to the storm and insurance claims reached 6.3 billion dollars with an estimated agricultural loss of 3.8 billion dollars. Four million acres of timber was damaged or

destroyed. Many of our employees were directly impacted with homes and structures sustaining damage from falling trees and high winds.

Game Wardens from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources responded and immediately went into action providing assistance to the residents of Georgia. A command center was established in Albany and disaster response teams moved into the affected areas to assist persons who were impacted by the storm. Game Wardens provided security, assisted local and federal agencies in logistics and cleared roads throughout the affected areas.



## Region VI- Metter (Southeast)



Kneeling L to R: Cpl. Tim Hutto, K9 Titan, GW Aaron Powell, GW Thomas Sibley, GW John Kennedy, GWFC Bobby Sanders, GW Cameron Dyal, GW Luke Rabun, GW Chris Thompson, GW Joseph Cowart, Cpl. Mark Pool. Sitting L to R: Sgt. Patrick Dupree, Sgt. James McLaughlin, Admin Assist. April Thrift, Sgt. Chris Moore, Admin. Sup. Christina Colquitt, Capt. Scott Killigel, Sgt. Morty Wood, Cpl. Shaymus McNeely, Cpl. Jason Shipes, Chaplan Chip Strickland Standing L to R: GWFC Randell Meeks, GWFC Patrick Gibbs, Cpl. Mike Wilcox, GWFC Jordan Crawford, GW Austin Biggers, GW Andrew Crider, GWFC Jaon Miller, GW Johnny Robinette, GWFC Sam Williams, GWFC Clint Jarriel, GWFC Rodney Horne, Cpl. Jon Penuel, Cpl. Dan Stiles, GWFC Judd Sears, Cpl. Chase Altman, GWFC Daniel North, Cpl. Kevin Joyce, GWFC Allen Mills

The Region VI office in Metter services 32 counties which are separated into five work sections. Region VI encompasses over 14,000 square miles or 24% of the land mass of Georgia and serves over 740,000 people. Most of it is privately-owned lands which covered with agricultural fields, planted timber and natural forests. Region VI Wardens cover state waters which includes river systems that span from the South Carolina border to the Florida border and over 145,000 acres of public lands that includes: six state parks, eighteen WMA properties, four PFA properties, various public dove fields and many VPA properties.

### Personnel

The office is staffed by Region Supervisor Captain Scott Klingel, Administrative Sergeant Chris Moore, Administrative Assistant III April Thrift, and Administrative Support I Christina Colquitt.

### New Hires

Andrew Crider assigned to Bacon County. Austin Biggers assigned to Telfair County. Aaron Powell assigned to Lowndes County. Luke Rabun assigned to Atkinson County. All completed the Game Warden Academy in June 2019.

### **Retirements**

Corporal John Stokes retired after 29 years of service. Stokes was assigned to Ben Hill County. Sergeant Jon Barnard retired after 28 years of service. Barnard was a section supervisor.

### **Region Personnel Awards**

GW Chris Thompson -Torch Award for 2019

GWFC Patrick Gibbs –Game Warden of the Year and Boating Officer of the Year

### **State Wide Awards**

Captain Scott Klingel -Supervisor of the Year

GWFC Patrick Gibbs -Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award and Instructor of the Year

### **National Awards**

2019 NAWEOA Torch Award GWFC Bobby Sanders

### **Continuing Education and Specialized Training**

Sergeant James McLaughlin graduated from the DNR Leadership Academy in November 2018 and continues to attend Command College at Columbus State University.

Game Wardens Mark Pool, Clint Jarriel Corporals Mike Wilcox, Tim Hutto, Jason Shipes, Kevin Joyce and Mark Pool attended classes at Columbus State University Professional Management Program (PMP).

Cpl. Jason Shipes attended Trax/ZetX cell phone training in Jacksonville, FL. With increased use of cell phones and social media by the public, this advanced training allows mapping of cell phone use which will aid poaching investigations.

### **Search and Rescue/Natural Disasters**

With specialized equipment and training, Georgia Game Wardens are always ready to assist in search and rescue operations whether on land, on water or in the air. Wardens also respond to all hunting incidents, boating incidents and drownings in the region. As in the past Wardens are quick to respond to natural disasters. Most Wardens patrol their counties after major storms past through to assist the local county agencies. As in case of major natural disasters such as hurricanes, Wardens respond by putting together specialized teams. Hurricane Michael was a major storm that hit with 155 mph winds in the Florida panhandle and ripped through Georgia. Southwest Georgia was impacted severely. Region VI Wardens responded alongside other Regions by providing around the clock details to assist local agencies for several days in the impacted areas.

### **Night Hunting**

Region VI has thousands of miles of roads that varies from four lane interstates down to one lane county dirt roads. Many of the smaller roads ramble through large tracts of agricultural fields and planted timber that are easily accessible from the roadway but are isolated from most of the population. Even with the disadvantage of having such a large area to cover, Region VI Game Wardens had another successful year of protecting the resources by apprehending night hunters. 56 groups of night hunters were stopped which led to 319 violations being documented.

Region VI Game Wardens have seen the use of modern technology being used to aid poachers. Game Wardens in the past year have apprehended poachers using night vision, infrared lights, suppressed rifles, weapon mounted lights, weapon mounted laser sights and thermal scopes.

### **Bear Hunting**

The southern end of the Region covers the Okefenokee Swamp. This area has a large population of black bears. Bear poaching has become a problem in the area.



Sergeant Dupree working with Game Management and US Fish and Wildlife Service at Okefenokee NWR was able to have a euthanized bear mounted. It will be used as a decoy to help thwart bear poaching activities in the area.

Region VI Game Wardens worked with Florida Game Wardens in catching poachers that were poaching in Florida and Georgia. In December the Game Wardens served arrest warrants and search warrants across North Florida. Nine individuals were charged with violations related to illegal bear hunting in Florida. Five of those same individuals were charged with numerous hunting violations in Georgia.



### **Investigations**

Along with patrols of their assigned area and working night hunt details, Game Wardens also respond to tips and complaints received via the Ranger Hotline, social media and in person. Violations and information on violations are found on social media platforms such as Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram.

On April 13th Cpl. Shaymus McNeely and GWFC Jordan Crawford completed an investigation that led to charges against four individuals for violations that occurred over the past two years. The group had poached a variety of game animals across Screven and Effingham counties. The investigation led to a total of 78 citations and warnings against the four suspects.



During an investigation of a local taxidermist GWFC Bobby Sanders and GW Cameron Dyal located a Mule Deer and a Whitetail Deer head brought into Georgia from Wyoming in violation of Chronic Wasting Disease Laws.



### **Dove Season/Waterfowl**

Region VI wardens conducted many dove field inspections before and during the season. Several fields were found to be in violation of the bait laws in Georgia and were posted before the season. Other fields were found to be in violation during the season and the violations were documented and birds seized. Waterfowl season is always a challenge because of the variety of locations that the waterfowl can inhabit. This includes the rivers, creeks, farm ponds and natural wet weather ponds.



Sergeant Jon Barnard, Corporal Kevin Joyce, and Game Wardens First Class Bobby Sanders and Randell Meeks confiscated 54 birds on a field in Toombs County.

Twenty-nine ducks confiscated by GWFC Clint Jarriel and Patrick Gibbs after locating a roost shoot.



### **Protecting the resources on state lands**

During the last few years, WRD has added new lands to those that are managed by DNR. Several WMA's grew in size, while several new properties added to the number of acres patrolled by the region's Wardens. Game Wardens patrol public lands for hunting, fishing and boating, as well as for other activities that range from illegal use of ATV's to drug possession.

Several of these properties have palmetto plants on them and the palmetto berries are popular in the homeopathic medicine market. Region VI Wardens work with other state agencies, such as Georgia Forestry Commission, to protect the public lands. Multiple groups have been arrested on various properties for illegally picking the berries.

As with the past few years, Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) has added onto the acres inside some of the WMA's. Bullard Creek's boundaries now encompass more than 16,000 acres Bullard Creek WMA also includes a gun range and a 3D archery range. Several of the WMA's have large amount of the palmetto plant growing inside the boundaries. This year Region VI wardens continued to work with other agencies to thwart the theft of the berries.

Sergeant Dupree's work unit encountered numerous individuals illegally picking berries.



Warden Chris Thompson apprehended five illegal immigrants stealing berries on Alapaha WMA in Irwin County.



## Community Involvement

Community Involvement is paramount for Game Wardens to be able to do their jobs. All Game Wardens participate in information and education programs (I&E's) in their local K-12 schools as well as the local colleges and vocational schools. The Region Wardens also offer three Hunter Safety programs for their assigned area. Game Wardens give I&E's to their local civic groups and their local government agencies and leadership.



GW Thomas Sibley teaching gun safety with safe guns at Berrien Elementary School during the CHAMPS Program.

Game Wardens also represent DNR LED at sportsmen events such as NWTF banquets, Evans Wildlife Festival, Gaskins Day in the Woods, James Eunice Charity Dove Hunt in Lowndes County as well as their local hunting clubs' events.



As in past years, one of the community highlights is assisting with the annual Lowndes Longspurs Youth Turkey School and Hunt. It is events such as this that ensures a strong community bond as well as raising up the next generation of outdoor stewards.

## Region VII- Brunswick (Coastal)



(L/R) 1<sup>st</sup> row- Captain Bob Lynn, GWFC Jack Thain, K-9 Case, Sgt. Mark Carson  
2<sup>nd</sup> row- Cpl. David Brady, Sgt. Damon Winters, GW Chandler Hamrick, GW Cassidy Gerstorff, GW Matt Tsiklistas, Cpl. Kiel Tony, Sgt. Cindy Miller  
3<sup>rd</sup> row- GWFC Jay Bright, Mechanic 3 Gary Denis, Sgt. Phillip Scott, Cpl. Randy Aspinwall, GWFC Tim Morris, GWFC Colte Shaske, GW Doug Chambers  
4<sup>th</sup> row- GW Zach Griffis, License Tech Ashley Hutson, AA3 Janette Senior, GW Quintin Reed, Cpl. Bobby White, Cpl. Barry Britt, Cpl. Bill Bryson  
Not Pictured- Sgt. Chris Ridley, Cpl. John Evans, Cpl. Kate Hargrove

Region VII is comprised of 3 inland counties and 6 coastal counties (Chatham, Bryan, Liberty, Long, Wayne, McIntosh, Brantley, Glynn, and Camden). Within Region VII, we have 15 Wildlife Management Area totaling 164,000 acres, 8 State Parks, 3,400 miles of tidal shoreline, and 105 miles of beaches. Region VII focuses heavily on the commercial fishing industry and offshore Federal fisheries. This year our efforts ranged from our “normal” hunting and fishing violations to assisting other agencies with crowd control to numerous commercial fishing violations.

On 7-24-18 two individuals took six baby loggerhead sea turtles from the beach and kept them in a trashcan in their hotel room. A worker in the hotel saw the turtles. The worker later took the turtles to the Tybee Marine Science Center. Cpl. Kiel Toney worked with Tybee PD and NOAA officer Hughes interviewing the two individuals. They eventually confessed about where they took the turtles. The case was turned over to US Fish and Wildlife. Each was fined approximately 1300 dollars for the violations.



On July 25<sup>th</sup> and July 26<sup>th</sup>, Game Wardens Colte Shaske and John Evans boarded commercial shrimping vessels offshore of Jekyll and St Simons Islands. They measured the TEDs (Turtle Excluder Device) and nets and checked fish on board. All boats were in compliance both days.



On July 27<sup>th</sup>, Cpl. John Evans and Wildlife Technician Hal Wiggins were patrolling the Clayhole Swamp WMA. They encountered a SUV at the pond next to the campground. The female was still behind the wheel and the male was at the back of the vehicle. Cpl. Evans began talking with the female and noticed that she was acting very nervous. He could smell the odor of marijuana and soon noticed a large marijuana blunt on the console that she was trying to hide. Further investigation yielded a bag of marijuana from the man's pocket and several drug paraphernalia items from the vehicle. Both people were arrested and charged with Violation of the GA Controlled Substance Act and Entering WRD property without a Lands Pass.

On Saturday September 22, 2018, Game Wardens Sgt. Scott, RFC Morris and RFC Thain with K9 Case were dispatched to assist Long County with a search for an elderly female and two juveniles lost in a large wooded area on the Liberty and Long County border. Upon arrival, hunt club members met with Sgt. Scott and advised that all parties had been located and that the elderly female needed medical attention and were not sure that she could be moved. RFC Thain transported EMS to the scene due to road conditions on the wood's roads. The elderly female was eventually found to be ambulatory and refused medical treatment. Long County Sheriff's Office began to find legal guardians for the juveniles and a care giver for the elderly woman. Game Wardens Scott and Thain transported EMS personnel and equipment back to their ambulance.





The first Saturday in October is always CoastFest. This event has been held at the Coastal Regional Headquarters Campus in Brunswick for the past 23 years. This year, with the status of parking at Liberty Harbor, CoastFest was moved to Mary Ross Waterfront Park in downtown Brunswick. The crowd was estimated at 9,500 people. Below is Sgt. Damon Winters discussing information with the public.

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Game Wardens Cassidy Gerstorff and Corporal John Evans investigated a complaint of possible night hunting near the city of Hoboken, in Brantley County. During the investigation the hunter's stand was found and the subject was identified by the complainant. While making contact at the subject's house it was found that the subject had killed several bucks over the last year and had taken three antlered bucks during the current season. Additionally, a cooler in the subject's yard was found to be full of meat from a doe deer. The head of the doe was found in the back of the subject's truck and the doe had not been checked in. The subject admitted to firing several shots after hours of darkness on the night of the hunting complaint. The subject was charged with hunting deer at night, taking over the limit of antlered deer, and not reporting the harvest of the doe. The antlers from the illegal deer were confiscated along with the doe and the cooler containing the meat. The meat was donated to a local processor to be given to a needy family



In December, Cpl. Kate Hargrove responded to capsized 56' Tugboat in Jekyll Creek. The crew was removed from vessel and transported to Jekyll Island. An investigation was initiated which involved LED, Coastal Resources Division, and United States Coast Guard's Marine Safety Unit. After a couple of weeks, the tugboat company had barges and cranes right the boat for salvage.



In December, after receiving information about two subjects who were taking deer illegally, Cpl. Randy Aspinwall seized seven racks as evidence and charged two subjects. As a result of the investigation, it was discovered that in addition to being over the limit, none were recorded and there were also multiple license violations.



On the morning of Sunday, March 24, 2019 Game Warden Scott checked an area in Bryan County to see if anyone was hunting turkeys. Sgt. Scott found one vehicle and waited for the hunter or hunters to return to the truck. Two hunters came back to the vehicle and talked with Sgt. Scott about their morning. Opened bags of wild bird seed and sunflower seeds were found in the back of the truck. Sgt. Scott asked if there was any bird seed where the two hunters had set up and called for turkeys and the hunters were unsure stating that bird seed is hard to see. Game Warden Thain with K9 Case were called to the scene to see exactly where the hunters had been. Case tracked the hunters a very short distance and alerted at the area the hunters had set up with broken limbs for a makeshift blind, a trail camera, and bird seed along with old and new sunflower seeds. The two hunters were cited for hunting big game over bait.

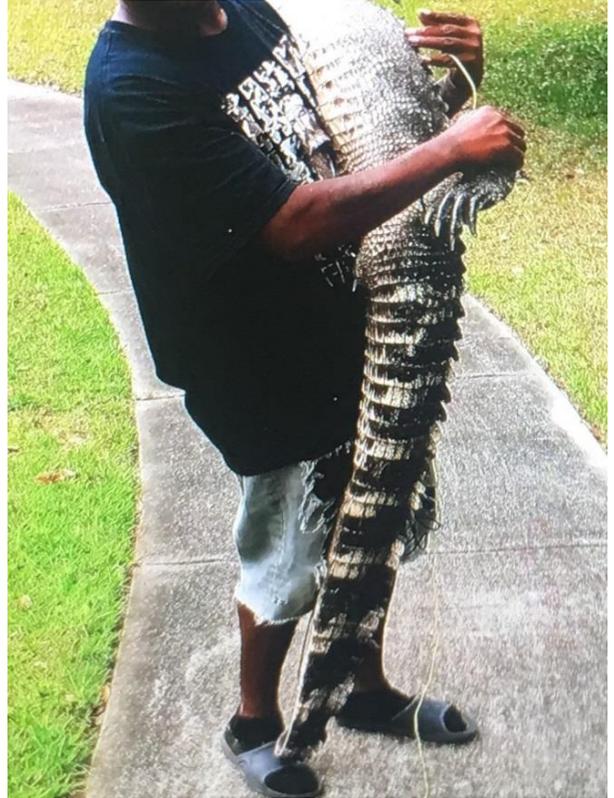


In April, Region VII completed the two-day Open Water Survival training class in Kingsland. This course taught Game Wardens the importance of wearing life jackets, how to defend off offenders while in the water, and showed everyone their limitations while in full uniform in the water.

On Saturday April 20, 2019, Game Wardens Barry Britt, Kate Hargrove, Matt Tsiklistas and Cassidy Gerstorff assisted the Tybee Island Police Department with security and public safety on Tybee Beach. The additional patrols from DNR LED were in anticipation of possible activity from an event known as “Orange Crush”. Since this event is not organized by any party working with the city of Tybee Island, it is difficult to pinpoint the weekend that will have the most activity. The event is often associated with the weekend of April 20th because 420 is associated with marijuana use.



On Saturday May 11, 2019 Game Wardens Jack Thain and Phillip Scott followed up on a concern that an alligator was taken illegally in Hinesville. On Friday the 10<sup>th</sup>, DNR Game Management responded to a request to pick up an alligator that someone said was a concern. When the Game Management technician arrived there was no alligator, and no one that could explain the situation. This was unusual and the technician asked that Game Wardens check into the situation. When Game Wardens Thain and Scott investigated they found that the alligator was caught by the man after local law enforcement advised the man to call DNR. Instead the man decided to catch the alligator. After he caught the alligator, residents called DNR. The Hinesville Police Department also were called and told the man he could hold the alligator on scene until DNR arrived. The alligator wrangler did not wait but instead took the alligator to his residence. When asked what happened to the alligator, the man told the Game Wardens that someone came by and stole the alligator way from his yard. The man was cited for taking an alligator out of season. Below is a partial photo of the proud alligator wrangler that was discovered during the investigation.



On May 15<sup>th</sup> Game Warden Cassidy Gerstorff notified Sgt. Chris Ridley that he was out with a possible jumper on the Sidney Lanier bridge. Sergeants Mark Carson and Ridley proceeded to the bridge by boat and Captain Bob Lynn responded to Gerstorff's location on the bridge. As Gerstorff was talking with the subject, Lt. Meeks from the Glynn County School Police arrived to assist. Lt. Meeks and Gerstorff while talking, began slowly moving closer to the subject who was sitting on the outside rail. Lt. Meeks, who knew the subject, asked for his girlfriend's phone number. When the subject looked down at his phone, Gerstorff jumped, grabbing the subject by the legs and pulled him onto the roadway. Lt. Meeks and Gerstorff were then joined by Captain Lynn and a Brunswick PD officer who were able to handcuff the subject. The subject was transported to Southeast Regional Hospital for evaluation. Officer Gerstorff was honored by the DNR Board with a resolution during their June meeting.





On Wednesday May 22, 2019 Game Wardens Douglas Chambers, Phillip Scott and K9 Case conducted inspections at the Savannah International Airport and at the Ga Port Authority on the Savannah River. These inspections were conducted along with NOAA Enforcement Officers Hughes and Dover as a part of DNR's Joint Enforcement Agreement. International items were checked for illegal wildlife. Below is a photo of Game Warden Thain with K9 Case checking containers and baggage for illegal wildlife at the Savannah International Airport.

On June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Game Warden Cassidy Gerstorff received an anonymous tip about the location of a Marijuana growing operation in Brantley County. Game Warden Gerstorff shared the information with the Brantley County Sheriff's Office Investigative Unit. Brantley County and Game Warden Gerstorff performed a brief check of the property and 25 marijuana plants were found. A trail camera was placed on the property and within a few days a subject was identified from the pictures. On July 5<sup>th</sup>, Game Wardens Cassidy Gerstorff and Colt Shaske assisted the Brantley County Sheriff's Office with executing a search warrant on the subject's property. GW Shaske discovered a pallet of 281 small marijuana plants hidden in the wood line on the property. Additionally, the search warrant yielded a hidden room in the garage for drying marijuana, a hidden compartment in the house, 15 firearms, and nearly an ounce of dried marijuana. The subject was taken into custody at that time by the Brantley County SO.



During the 2018 hunting season, Game Wardens in Region VII conducted numerous night hunting patrols. These patrols included catching 10 groups of night hunters, 17 people were cited with 37 citations and 9 warnings.

During this year Region VII had excellent officers performing above and beyond expectations. Cpl. John Evans was the Region Ranger of the Year, Cpl. David Brad was the Region Boating Officer of the Year and Waterfowl Officer of the year, RFC Tim Morris was the Torch Award winner, Game Warden Jay Bright was the Region Investigator of the Year, and Cpl. Bobby White was NWTF officer of the year.

Region VII had personnel changes throughout the year. Cpl. Jay Morgan retired with 36 years of service. RFC Mark Day retired with 28 years of service. We had two Game Warden Academies this year and received 4 new Game Wardens to the Region. Matt Tsiklistas was assigned Long County, Chandler Hamrick was assigned to Bryan/Liberty County, and Quintin Reed was assigned to Chatham County. Zach Griffis transferred into McIntosh County from Region IV. GW David Brady was promoted to Corporal.

Region VII is the only Region that 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. The Joint Agreement #17 between Georgia DNR and NOAA office of Law Enforcement called for GADNR enforcement personnel to provide a total of 1,717 hours of marine law enforcement or related work under the agreement. Under this agreement, Georgia had 5 Execution Priorities. Execution Priority 1 was Endangered Species Act. There were 383-man hours and 144 hours of at-sea vessel patrol hours dedicated to this priority and there were 36 hours of Aircraft flight hours and 36 hours of Aircraft personnel hours. These patrols were checking Shrimp Trawlers for TED and net compliance. Execution Priority 2 was dedicated to Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. There were 445-man hours and 165 hours of at-sea vessel patrols dedicated to priority 2. These patrols were to check Red Snapper compliance and any other violation dealing with Snapper/Grouper and HMS species. Execution Priority 3 was National Marine Sanctuaries Act. There were 240-man hours and 80 hours of at-sea vessel patrols dedicated to Priority 3. Execution Priority 4 was Lacey Act/International (IUU). There were 28 personnel hours dedicated to IUU enforcement. These patrols were assisting NOAA Enforcement Officers with inspection of containers at the Georgia Ports. Execution Priority 5 was Marine Mammal Protection Act. There were 120-man hours and 40 at-sea vessel hours dedicated to Marine Mammal Protection. These patrols were during the months of November to March and were specifically targeting Right Whale enforcement.

Game Wardens detected 24 Federal Fisheries violations including over the limit of fish, possession of illegal species, illegal nets, and Turtle Excluder Device (TED) violations. 13 of these violations were case referrals to NOAA Office of Law Enforcement. These documented violations were turned over to NOAA for prosecution.

## **Investigative Unit**

The Investigative Unit (IU) is comprised of two full-time investigators and one Intelligence Analyst. The IU is responsible for undercover investigations, administration of the Critical Incident Reconstruction Team (CIRT), the Marine Theft Unit (MTU), as well as investigation assistance to the Special Permit Unit (SPU). The primary function of the Investigative Unit is to provide field Game Wardens with investigative support. The Investigative Unit is able to fulfill this mission with the support of 13 Game Wardens that perform a collateral duty called "Regional Investigator." Regional Investigators assist the IU with overt and covert investigations. The IU also serves the field as a central point of contact for information sharing on a statewide level. Since last year, the Investigative Unit significantly expanded its support capabilities with the addition of an Intelligence Analyst, gaining access to multiple intelligence databases, and through extensive use of new technologies such as ZetX. This past year, three investigators completed the ZetX 40-Hour Advanced Cellular Investigations Training. This technology is requested and used daily not only by Georgia Game Wardens but also by state prosecutors, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and countless police and sheriff's departments. Through this assistance, the Investigative Unit and the Department have strengthened working relationships with other law enforcement agencies throughout the state, benefiting Georgia law enforcement and more importantly, the citizens we serve.

### **Undercover Investigations**

The Investigative Unit is responsible for undercover investigations which are used when traditional enforcement methods would be problematic or unsuccessful. The Regional Investigators are full-time Game Wardens who have received training in undercover operations and specialized equipment and are used throughout the state as needed.

Last year, the Investigative Unit conducted and managed 285 investigations and calls for assistance from the field and from other agencies (both in and out-of-state). 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 15 CIRT investigators assigned throughout the state. CIRT investigates fatality and serious injury boating, hunting and state park incidents. Each investigator receives specialized training on investigating and presenting these cases. Last year, CIRT was activated to investigate four boating incidents. These incidents resulted in one fatality.

### **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, hidden hull identification number location assistance, 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 47 abandoned vessel/stolen boat requests from the public and fielded numerous phone calls related to the abandoned vessel process.

## Special Permits Unit

The Georgia DNR Law Enforcement Division Special Permits 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. This past year, the Special Permits unit issued 2,087 permits.

## K-9 Unit

The Division continues to use K-9s to enhance patrol efforts by Game Wardens and provide assistance to other agencies for man tracking and article searches. The K-9 Unit played a part in numerous cases during the year. Also, in 2019 the handlers' uniforms were changed to all olive drab in order to better suit their needs. Georgia currently has seven K-9/Handler teams across the state.



## FY2019 K-9/Handler Teams

**Sgt. Jeremy Bolen and K-9 Ruger**

**Cpl. Brooks Varnell and K-9 Taz**

**Cpl. Tim Hutto and K-9 Titan**

**GWFC Eric Isom and K-9 Colt**

**Cpl. Greg Wade and K-9 Trigg**

**GWFC Keith Page and K-9 Rio**

**GWFC Jack Thain and K-9 Case**



## Training Unit

In early 2019, the Division hired 25 new Game Warden cadets and one Game Warden pilot. Revenue generated as a result of the passing of HB 208 in 2017, which increased hunting, fishing, and recreational license fees, provided salary and benefit funding, as well as a full complement of equipment for 13 of the new hires. This funding will also provide money for additional personnel, equipment and operational costs in the future.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Game Warden Academy began on January 6<sup>th</sup> at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. During the 23-week academy, the cadets completed Basic Peace Officer Certification as well as the Advanced Game Warden Academy which totaled 935 hours of training. The Academy includes 80 hours of NASBLA BOAT training for BCM (Boat Crew Member) and BOSAR (Boat Operator Search and Rescue). The Division's in-house NASBLA certified instructors delivered these comprehensive courses at Lake Walter F. George.

Officer Water Survival training was also taught within the 33<sup>rd</sup> Game Warden Academy. Cadets spent approximately 40 hours in the pool learning essential water survival skills. The course involved self-rescue, survival swimming, and tactics for surviving physical and armed confrontations in the water. Training was conducted in full duty uniform and body armor, while wearing weighted gun belts.



Nineteen Game Warden Cadets graduated from the 33<sup>rd</sup> Game Warden Academy on June 14<sup>th</sup>. They are currently in the process of completing the Division's field training program in their assigned counties throughout the state.

During the year, in-service training for all Game Wardens statewide included NASBLA Seated Battery and a Standardized Field Sobriety refresher, Police Legitimacy and Procedural Justice, De-escalation, Use-of-Force, Firearms training/re-qualification, and Policy/Legislative Updates. Game Wardens also underwent statewide Officer Water Survival Training. This 16-hour course was the result of the pilot program that was implemented during the 33<sup>rd</sup> Game Warden Academy and involved the same training that the cadets of the 33<sup>rd</sup> completed during the academy.

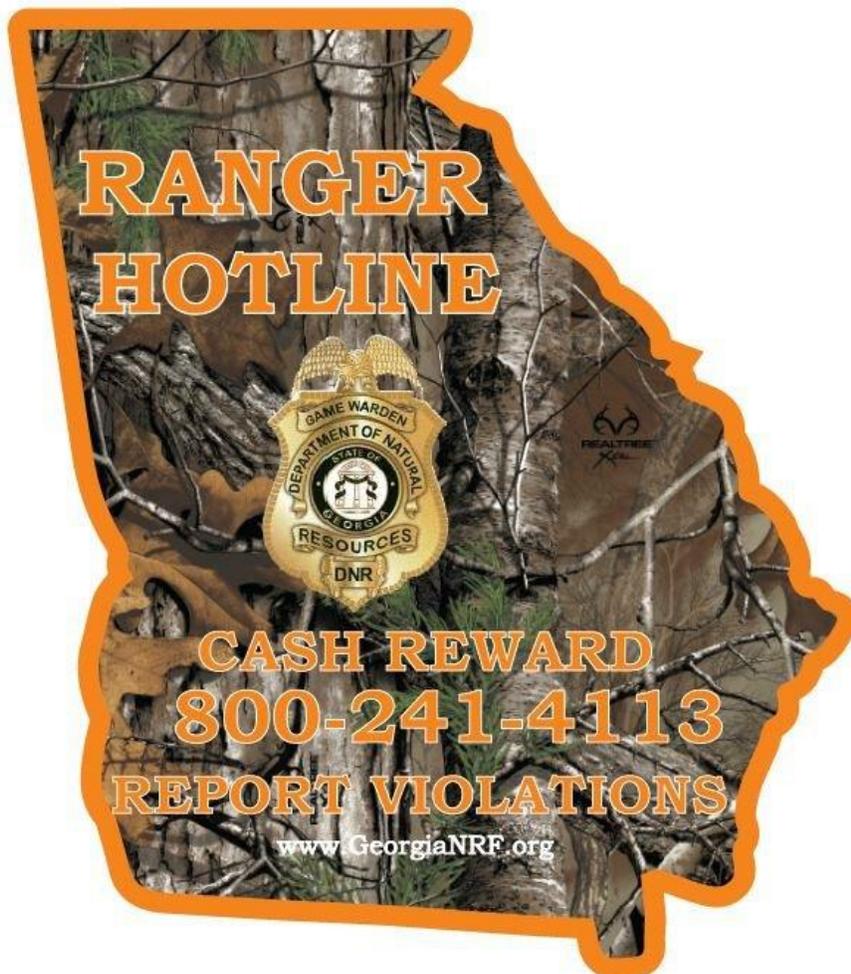
Eight Game Wardens participated in Swift Water Boat Operations training on the Chattahoochee River in Zodiac swift water rescue vessels that were issued to selected personnel last year. Instructors from the Whitewater Rescue Institute in Missoula, Montana were brought in to train the Game Wardens in the operation of swift water rescue vessels in areas of white water in the Chattahoochee River south of West Point Dam.



During 2019, the Division's firearms training staff was tasked with researching and selecting a new duty handgun. After testing several models, the decision was made to transition from the current Glock Gen4 model 22, .40 caliber pistol to the Glock model 45, 9mm pistol. The pistol was issued to Game Wardens in the field statewide in early October. Each Game Warden is now issued the Glock Models 45 and 43 9mm handguns, the Daniel Defense DDM4 5.56 Tactical Rifle and the Remington 870 12-gauge shotgun.

The first two Phases of X2 TASER deployment were completed during 2019. Seventy-three Game Wardens were trained and have been issued X2 TASER units for use in the field. The deployment of TASERs concentrated on field level Game Wardens under the rank of Lieutenant and will continue until all field personnel are trained and equipped.

A committee was also formed to explore and research possible changes to the Game Warden hiring and selection process. The goal of the committee was to recommend changes that would increase the number, quality and diversity of candidates for the position of Game Warden. Recommendations were made to exempt honorably discharged veterans, with a minimum of four years of active duty military service, from the current minimum educational requirement of an Associate Degree or 60 Semester/90 Quarter hours of completed college credit. The committee also recommended a restructuring of the current pre-employment physical agility tests. The recommendations included combining the two  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile runs in to one 1.5-mile run, and the addition of a push-up and sit-up event. The recommendation was made to modify the current swim event by replacing the 50-yard fully clothed swim with a 20-meter swim assessment. This assessment was determined by the Division's water survival instructors to be sufficient in determining the minimum amount entry level ability necessary for a cadet to enter the water survival training program. Cadets will then be required to complete the academy swim and Officer Water Survival training programs



## Aviation Unit



**L-R: Larry Rogers, Capt. Steven Turner, Maj. Doc Watson, Capt. Ed Watkins, John Peberdy  
Not pictured: Lt. Robert Steht**

The LED Aviation Support Unit supports all DNR Divisions and other state agencies utilizing two Bell 407 helicopters, one Bell L4 and a fixed wing Quest Kodiak 100 airplane.

The Aviation Unit flew 588 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. Additionally, the Aviation Unit flew 50 hours over a four-day period providing support to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Natural Resources and multiple local agencies after Hurricane Michael devastated Southwest Georgia in October 2018. 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. Thirty-eight hours assisting with prescribed burns on the State WMA's were also flown during the late winter months of January through March 2018.

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. This past year the Aviation Unit trained to insert a Game Warden from the aircraft, via rappel technique, into rugged and remote locations. This training was placed into service when responding to a request for assistance for a SAR in the Cohutta Wilderness Area in Fannin County. SGT James Keener and Aerial Observer GWFC Roger McConkey executed the unit's first rappel operation in May 2019, rescuing an injured hiker who was located several miles from any motorized access and assistance. The Aviation Unit conducted five other successful long line rescues and flew 98 hours for search and rescue (SAR), drownings and missing person missions with aerial observers.



The TASE 500 camera system equipped Kodiak Quest fixed-wing aircraft, with trained camera operators 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. This capability was evident in the increased apprehension of illegal night poachers throughout the state this past year.

The Unit was very fortunate at years' end receiving funding for a new Bell 407. This 407 will replace the 23-year-old Bell L-4; increasing our capabilities while decreasing training and maintenance costs for the Division, while increasing safety.

## **Honor Guard**



### **Honor Guard Members**

Region 1 – Sgt. Brooks Varnell, Cpl. Cody Jones  
Region 2 – Sgt. Derek Dillard (Commander), GW Jeffery Turner  
Region 3 – Cpl. Ben Payne, GWFC Dan Schay  
Region 4 – Sgt. Travis Sweat, Sgt. Jeremy Bolen  
Region 5 – Capt. Bob Holley (training center), Cpl. Scott Carroll  
Region 6 – Cpl. Chase Altman, GWFC Clint Jarriel  
Region 7 – Sgt. David Brady, Cpl. Keil Toney

### **Honor Guard Details**

- July 9-11, 2018 – Annual honor guard training for all members at the GPSTC in Forsyth, Georgia.
- August 18, 2018 – Funeral detail for retired Game Warden Ronnie Thomaston in Warrenton, Georgia where honor guard member Cpl. Kiel Toney presented a flag to the family.
- August 19, 2018 – Presentation of Colors by Game Wardens Cpl. Kiel Toney, Cpl. Chase Altman, Cpl. David Brady and GWFC Clint Jarriel at the annual DNR LED Awards Banquet in Savannah, Georgia.
- October 19, 2018 – Presentation of Colors and honor guard detail for the 32 Game Warden Academy Graduation Ceremony at the GPSCT in Forsyth, Georgia. Game Wardens Sgt. Derek Dillard, Sgt. Brooks Varnell, Cpl. Scott Carroll, Cpl. Cody Jones, Cpl. Kiel Toney, Cpl. Ben Payne, Cpl. David Brady, GWFC Clint Jarriel and GWFC Dan Schay participated in the ceremony.

- October 24, 2018 – Funeral detail for Gwinnett County P.D. Officer Antwan Toney in Lawrenceville, Georgia where honor guard member GWFC Chris Kernahan was in attendance to represent Georgia DNR.
- December 18, 2018 – Funeral detail for DeKalb County P.D. Officer Edgar Flores in Dunwoody, Georgia where honor guard member GWFC Chris Kernahan was in attendance to represent Georgia DNR.
- December 29, 2018 – Visitation and funeral detail for retired Game Warden Corporal Jimmy Williams in Alma, Georgia. Game Wardens Cpl. Kiel Toney, Cpl. Chase Altman and GWFC Clint Jarriel participated at the visitation and then folded and presented the flag to the family.
- January 7-8, 2019 – Annual honor guard training for all members at the GPSTC in Forsyth, Georgia.
- April 12, 2019 – Visitation and funeral detail for Park Ranger Ron Shepard in Calhoun, Georgia. Game Wardens Sgt. Derek Dillard and GWFC Chris Kernahan participated at the visitation and attended the funeral.
- May 17, 2019 – Presentation of Colors for the Blue Star Dedication Ceremony at the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center by Game Wardens Sgt. Derek Dillard, Sgt. Jeremy Bolen, Cpl. Scott Carroll and Cpl. Cody Jones.
- May 20, 2019 – Represented the Georgia DNR LED at the Peace Officer Memorial Detail at the GPSTC in Forsyth, Georgia by Game Wardens Cpl. Ben Payne and GWFC Dan Schay.
- June 14, 2019 – Presentation of Colors and at participated in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Game Warden Academy Graduation Ceremony at the GPSTC in Forsyth, Georgia. Sgt. Derek Dillard, Sgt. Travis Sweat, Cpl. Scott Carroll, Cpl. Chase Altman, Cpl. Kiel Toney, Cpl. Cody Jones, Cpl. David Brady and GWFC Dan Schay participated in the ceremony.
- June 29, 2019 – Funeral detail for retired Game Warden Malcomb “Mike” Brooks in Folkston, Georgia. Game Wardens Cpl. Chase Altman and GWFC Clint Jarriel presented a flag to the family.



## Chaplains



**L-R: Charles Houston, Jr., Joel Vinson, Chip Strickland, Daryl Brown, Tac Coley, Marc Crandlemire, Rudy Ross, Brandon Brooks**

**Not Pictured: Gregory Loskoski, John Haney, Randy Lamb**

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

The DNR Chaplains are non-sworn volunteers who support the mission of DNR in providing a source of strength to sworn and non-sworn members of the Agency, their families, and the community. The program supports employees in the handling of crisis situations, comforts victims and their families when incidents occur, and provides counseling and other ministerial functions that may be needed.

**Promotions:**

RFC 1 Randell Meeks  
 RFC 1 Bethany Gilbert  
 Cpt. Robert Holley  
 Sgt. Travis Sweat  
 Cpl. Quinn Fogel  
 Sgt. Tony Cox  
 Ranger 2 Carla Gann  
 Ranger 2 Tyler Lewis  
 Ranger 2 Garrett Pownall  
 Ranger 2 Wil Smith  
 Ranger 2 Jeff Turner  
 Ranger 2 Chris Adkins  
 Ranger 2 Noah Osborne  
 Ranger 2 Jerry Paulk  
 Ranger 2 John Rhodes  
 Ranger 2 Jason Bennett  
 Ranger 2 Calvin Gibson  
 Ranger 2 Kevin Hurley  
 Ranger 2 Ryan Cleveland  
 Ranger 2 Logan South  
 Ranger 2 Philip Stout  
 Ranger 2 Cameron Dyal  
 Ranger 2 Thomas Sibley  
 Ranger 2 Cassidy Gerstorff  
 Cpl. Keith Page  
 Major Mike England  
 RFC 1 Doug Chambers  
 Cpl. Kevin Godbee  
 Ranger 2 Ryan Shorter  
 Ranger 2 Caleb Thomson  
 Ranger 2 Zach Griffis  
 Ranger 2 Steven Martinez  
 Ranger 2 Taylor Brown  
 Ranger 2 Kristie Carpenter  
 Ranger 2 Brock Hoyt  
 Ranger 2 Bryan Price  
 Ranger 2 John Kennedy  
 Ranger 2 Ben Reese  
 Ranger 2 Johnny Robinette  
 Ranger 2 John Tsiklistas  
 Lt. Chad Welch  
 Cpl. Steve Thomas  
 Cpl. David Brady  
 Cpl. Tim Butler  
 Cpl. Ricky Boles  
 Lt. Colonel Johnny Johnson

**Retirements:**

Colonel Eddie Henderson  
 RFC2 Mitchell Crump  
 Cpl. Eric Sanders  
 Cpl. Julian Wilkins  
 RFC2 Ronnie Beard  
 Cpl. Jay Morgan  
 RFC2 Freddie Hays  
 RFC1 Mark Day  
 Sgt. Jon Barnard  
 Cpl. John Stokes  
 Captain Ed Watkins  
 Major Doc Watson  
 Lt. Colonel Jeff Weaver  
 Captain Jeff Galloway

<b>Activity Summary</b>		<b>FY2019</b>
Hunter Ed Programs		122
I&E Programs		1,223
Boating Safety Programs		182
Hunter Development		56
<b>Total Programs</b>		<b>1,583</b>
Water SAR Cases		214
Water SAR Hours		3,783
Vessels Assisted		214
Water Persons Asst.		505
Land SAR Cases		154
Land SAR Hours		1,463
Land Persons Asst.		295
Hunting Incidents		41
Boating Incidents		104
Drownings		53
Hunting License Checks		15,050
Fishing License Checks		34,955
Comm. License Checks		501
Total License Checks		50,506
Boat Checks		24,056
Boating Contacts		5,538
Hunting Contacts		5,305
Fishing Contacts		3,544
Trapping Contacts		44
Environmental Contacts		471
Other Contacts		5,079
<b>Total Contacts</b>		<b>19,981</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



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**Michael Waddell  
Bone Collector  
The Outdoor Channel**



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