



GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Commissioner
Mark Williams

Director
Colonel Thomas
Barnard



Law Enforcement Division
FY 2020 Annual Report

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 200 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, eight Captains (6 Region Supervisors, 1 Training Director, 1 Pilot), seven Lieutenants (database management, special permits/captive wildlife and wild animals, boating law administrator and administrative support, professional standards, investigations, 2 pilots), and 181 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. Forty-eight new 4x4 patrol vehicles were purchased for field personnel. New equipment included the Visual Labs body-worn camera system with cloud-based storage for all video, audio, and photos, and supplemental rifle-rated body armor 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, 298 tips were received for various violations.

OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

Protests/Riots

As the fiscal year began to wrap up in June, Game Wardens from across the state were deployed to help preserve life and property as protests turned into riots related to the officer-involved shootings of George Floyd in Minnesota and Rayshard Brooks in Atlanta. In total, there were 384 field deployments that logged more than 4,800 man-hours. The Game Warden duties included preserving life and property, assisting local and other state agencies, protecting the rights of citizens for peaceful assembly, preventing protesters from gaining access and closing or interfering with critical infrastructure, and providing security at several state-owned properties and private retail businesses.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 Pandemic brought on more challenges as Governor Brian Kemp called Game Wardens and other state law enforcement officers to support efforts to fight the virus. They continued to patrol Parks, Wildlife Management Areas, Public Fishing Areas, and beaches to encourage compliance with the Governor's Executive Order for social distancing and also provided high-visibility presence at DNR facilities, properties and on state waterways. By the end of the fiscal year, the officers had worked over 19,170 hours while conducting 5,495 targeted patrols in the monitoring and enforcing of COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders and directives. They reported 1,039 violations - 1,038 verbal warnings and one reckless conduct charge. Additionally, they were a key link in the logistics chain by delivering PPE, testing kits, and medical supplies and equipment to various facilities across the state.

JEA Patrols

The Joint Agreement #18 between Georgia DNR and NOAA office of Law Enforcement called for GADNR enforcement personnel to provide a total of 1,748 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 435-man hours and 155 hours of at-sea vessel patrol hours dedicated to this priority. These patrols were checking shrimp trawlers for TED and net compliance. Execution Priority 2 was dedicated to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. There were 405-man hours and 145 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 255-man hours and 85 hours of at-sea vessel patrols dedicated to Priority 3. Execution Priority 4 was the Marine Mammal Right Whale. There were 132-man hours and 44 hour of at-sea vessel patrols. These patrols were from November through March and were specifically targeting Right Whale enforcement. Execution Priority 5 was the Lacey Act/International (IUU). There were 92 personnel hours dedicated to IUU enforcement. These patrols were assisting NOAA Enforcement Officers with inspection of containers at the Georgia Ports. Vessel patrol hours targeted the following areas: 1) shrimp trawlers checking for TED compliance, 2) intercepts of recreational and commercial fishing vessels returning to Georgia seaports from fishing trips in federal waters, 3) offshore patrols to Special Management Zones and Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, 4) concentrations of fishing vessels wherever they occur in the Exclusive Economic Zone adjacent to the State of Georgia, 5) intercepts of recreational fishing vessels for Red Snapper compliance, and 6) inspection of shipping container at the Georgia Ports.

Public Affairs

Media Relations and Public Outreach

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, media news conferences and ride-alongs with Game Wardens were replaced by news releases, radio and TV interviews, and social media posts at the start of the boating and hunting seasons, "Operation Dry Water," and the July 4th Holiday weekend to promote safe boating and swimming safety and to educate citizens on boating laws and how they are applied. Additionally, 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 on the Governor's COVID-19 Executive Orders, the Division's hunting, fishing, and boating enforcement efforts, and awards and recognitions received by game wardens.

SPLASH

The Division continued moving forward with the multi-agency water safety initiative, SPLASH, although the in-person meetings were cancelled after February because of the pandemic. 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. Through phone and email communications, the efforts of the group continued as they shared promotional ideas, discussed implementation and collected and distributed over 1,000 life jackets to loaner boards across the state. 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.

Throughout the campaign, the SPLASH team has 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 is approaching 70,000 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 100,000, and occasionally, some are above 500,000. The Division also has a Twitter account that currently has nearly 1,700 followers, a YouTube Channel with multiple safety-related videos, and an Instagram account with almost 6,700 followers.



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	Quinn Fogle	2019



Region I- Acworth

Region I is comprised of 28 Northwest Georgia and metro Atlanta counties. The territory expansion now includes four major impoundments, seven major rivers, 10 State Parks, 21 Wildlife Management Areas consisting of 266,852 acres and 173,000 acres of US Forest Service lands, and 2,440 miles of trout streams. The region is patrolled by 36 Game Wardens.

Promotions and Personnel Changes

There were numerous personnel changes in the Acworth Region. Mike Burgamy was promoted to Region Captain vacated by the retirement of Captain Jeff Galloway in July 2019. Brooks Varnell was promoted to Field Sergeant over the Lake Allatoona section. Sgt. Brent Railey retired from the West Point section. Daniel Gray and Zack Hardy were promoted to Corporal in the Metro section. Kalem Burns, Charles Follin, Travis Shrader, Frank Pucci and Ken Lalumiere were promoted to Game Warden First Class 1. Jason Warren, Kyle Faulknor, and Andrew Crider were promoted to Game Warden 2. Sherry Rollins was promoted to full-time Administrative Support 1. Brock Hoyt transferred from Stewart to Fulton County. Wil Smith transferred from Wilkes to Pickens County. Phillip Stout transferred from Calhoun to Cherokee County Boat and Safety. Steven Martinez transferred from Troup County to Red Top Mountain State Park position. Ryan Shorter transferred to Coweta County. Charles Follin transferred to Fayette County. Caleb Thomas transferred to Murray County/ Ft. Mtn. State Park. Corporal Daniel Gray was the Region 1 nominee for Game Warden of the Year. Game Warden 2 Tyler Lewis was the State Torch Award winner. GWFC1 Frank Pucci was the State Boating Safety winner. Corporal Daniel Gray was the Region 1 nominee for the Wild Turkey Award.

Operational

Fiscal Year 2020 has been an unprecedented year. The onset of COVID-19 and riots in Atlanta due to Police shootings, produced calls for service outside the Game Warden norm. Region 1 officers along with those from across the state worked long tireless hours making late night medical runs to help facilities combat COVID-19 to ATV crowd and security details in downtown Atlanta.



In April 2020, Game Wardens Ryan Shorter and Brock Hoyt relayed an urgent and late-night shipment of medical supplies to Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital. The 7- hour round trip from Kennesaw to Albany provided the states most affected region essential surgical equipment, protective gear for hospital workers, and ventilators for critical patients.



In October 2019, Cpl. Chad Cox located a small truck parked off Hwy 101 in Yorkville. Cpl. Cox waited near the truck until it got dark and then used his night vision goggles to watch two people walking in the woods. When the first person exited the woods, he shined a light in the direction of Cpl. Cox's patrol vehicle, so Cpl. Cox drove his vehicle closer and identified himself. The other subject was hiding in the nearby woods and Cpl. Cox directed him to come out of the woods. Both suspects had tried to hide their rifles and hunting gear. Both were arrested and taken to the Paulding County Jail for hunting without a license, hunting without a big game license, hunting without fluorescent orange vest and possession of firearm by a convicted felon.

In March of 2020 Game Warden Carla Gann noticed suspicious vehicles parked near one of the reservoirs on Rocky Mtn. PFA. GW Gann was unable to locate the individuals at the time. A few days later GW Gann and GW Warren were able to put a cellular camera out in an area near the Lower Reservoir. Due to the location of the camera and the timely pictures that the Game Wardens were able to receive, there were 4 total cases made from the Month of March thru the Month of May. Those 4 cases made a total of 14 individuals caught, 55 fish confiscated (multiple species) and 16 misdemeanor citations. On one occasion the subjects caught were repeat offenders and resulted in higher fine amounts.





In November 2019, Sgt. Eric Brown, Sgt Brooks Varnell, K-9 Taz, Cpl. Daniel Gray, GW Brock Hoyt, and GW Ryan Shorter successfully executed a detail to catch a notorious poacher in Fulton County. The subject was arrested and charged with hunting without permission, hunting big game over bait, possession of methamphetamine, and possession of THC oil. The investigation was a month-long surveillance detail.

In November 2019, Game Warden Garrett Pownall became aware of and began helping Alabama DCNR with an investigation of a wildlife rehabilitator who had several violations in Alabama and Georgia. Game Warden Pownall issued 4 citations to the individual including rehabilitating without a permit and rehabilitating in an unapproved facility. The individual was arrested for violating probation after being charged with over 20 violations in Alabama.

In November 2019, GW Brock Hoyt and GW Tyler Lewis completed a dual county investigation on a subject deer hunting in Fulton and Cobb County. A total of 8 citations and 7 warnings were issued for hunting without permission, hunting big game over bait, taking over the limit of antlered deer, and failure to record harvest. An 11-point buck, 10-point buck, and 8-point buck were confiscated during the investigation.



In March 2020, Sgt. Eric Brown, Cpl. Daniel Gray, Cpl. Zack Hardy, GW Ryan Shorter, GW Garrett Pownall and GW Brock Hoyt conducted an inspection on a taxidermy shop in Haralson County. During the inspection Game Wardens discovered 223 violations. 11 warnings/citations were issued during the investigation.

In June 2020 Cpl. Hendrix was dispatched to a boating incident with injuries on Allatoona Lake in Cherokee County. When Cpl. Hendrix arrived on scene, he was met with something unusual. The victim was operating a Jetovator, which is operated behind a jet-ski. The victim while operating this Jetovator was approximately 20 feet in the air when he crashed down on top of the Jet-ski, where he suffered several broken bones.

In October 2019, Cpl. Hendrix finished an on-going investigation in Cherokee County involving night hunters. During this investigation five individuals were implicated in a continuing night hunting ring. Cpl. Hendrix was able to gain evidence in the case and after a long investigation took a total of 41 warrants on the individuals. The charges in this case were all in correlation with night hunting deer.

In October 2019 Game Warden Tyler Lewis was patrolling Cobb County when he came across a vehicle on property that is not legal to hunt. After contacting two subjects that were hunting on the property an investigation ensued. Game Warden Tyler Lewis was able to find a rifle hidden in the woods, illegal narcotics on the subjects, the deer stands on private property, and bait under the tree stands. After finding out who the rifle belonged to, that subject's criminal history was ran, finding out he was a convicted felon. Charges in this case included possession of a sawed-off rifle with a homemade silencer, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, possession of meth, hunting without permission, and hunting big game over bait.



In December 2019 Game Warden Tyler Lewis was foot patrolling land owned by Cobb County. While patrolling he encountered a subject hunting with a rifle. Through interviewing the individual, he learned that a second subject was also hunting in the area. Through further investigation the second subject was located, also on Cobb County property. While conducting his investigation he received information that one of the individuals is a convicted felon and the other individual had cocaine with him. The individuals were arrested and charged with violations ranging from possession of firearm by a convicted felon, possession of cocaine, to hunting with a firearm in a closed firearm county, hunting without permission, hunting without a big game license, and hunting without a license.

In April 2020 Game Warden Steven Martinez received a call of several people drinking alcohol and causing a disturbance on Red Top State Park. Game Warden Martinez responded to the scene by boat and when pulling up to the bank all the subjects took off running on foot. After docking the boat on shore, he went in the direction the subjects ran and came across two of the individuals leaving in a vehicle. He was able to get them stopped when he asked for identification. The subject told Game Warden Steven Martinez he would not give him his identification, at which time Martinez attempted to open the car door. The driver then took off dragging Game Warden Martinez down the road. He let go of the vehicle and rolled into the ditch and the driver ran off the road striking a telephone pole. The subject was arrested and charged with aggravated assault on a police officer, felony narcotics, and DUI.

One of the largest investigations conducted by section Wardens was initiated on November 19th, 2019. The photograph is Warden Ryan Thomas with several of the bucks confiscated during a lengthy investigation that was conducted by GW Thomas, GW Travis Shrader and Cpl. Casey Jones. After reviewing evidence seized from six search warrants and conducting multiple interviews with witnesses, landowners, and the suspects, it was discovered that six men had killed at least 16 deer illegally. Seven of the illegally taken deer were recovered. The six poachers



were charge with 140 different violations including multiple counts of hunting without permission, hunting without license, hunting without big game license, taking antlerless deer, taking over the limit of bucks, hunting deer at night, hunting from a motor vehicle, hunting from a public road and reporting and recording violations. Currently, four of the men have pled guilty receiving two years of probation, a two-year suspension of their hunting rights and \$3000 in fines each. One of the poachers failed to appear in court and is currently at large.



Cpl. Casey Jones (left) and GW Ryan Thomas (right) view tornado damage.

In April 2020, a tornado struck the City of Fort Oglethorpe in Catoosa County. Game Warden Travis Shrader assisted the Catoosa County Sheriff's Office and the Fort Oglethorpe Police Department with calls for service, traffic control, and debris removal. Game Warden Shrader also assisted with two successful recoveries of subjects from flooded waters. This same tornado touched down again in North Murray County hitting a mobile home community. There were seven fatalities. Game Wardens Casey Jones and Ryan Thomas immediately responded and assisted with debris removal and the search for missing persons. Several additional Wardens were called upon in the following days to assist as well.

In February 2020, Game Wardens Sgt. James Keener, Travis Shrader, Ryan Thomas, Mark Moyer, and Kalem Burn were called to assist with a plane crash in Gordon County. A small plane had disappeared off radar around 12:45 am. Due to the location and terrain Game Wardens assisted with locating the crash scene and victims. The search became a multiple day search. All four victims of the crash were located and recovered from the wreckage. DNR Aviation and Game Wardens with ATVs continued to assist the National Transportation Safety Board and FAA for several days with the location of wreckage and recovery due to the remote location.





In March 2020, Game Warden Ryan Thomas was patrolling Coosawattee WMA when he observed a vehicle driving recklessly. Warden Thomas attempted to stop the vehicle which resulted in a brief pursuit. The suspect eventually stopped where he was taken into custody by Thomas and Cpl. Casey Jones. The suspect was found to be in possession of two ounces of methamphetamine, a quantity of marijuana, scales, pipes, and packaging material. A firearm was also recovered that the subject had thrown out of the window during the chase.



Corporal Keith Page is currently assigned to Spalding County. Corporal Page is an active K9 officer with the department with officer Rio as his K9 and routinely travels outside the work section to assist. In December of 2019 Corporal Page was called to Bleckley County to assist with a report that a group of duck hunters had been shot at, but the possible suspect may have hidden his firearm. Corporal Page responded with K9 Rio and after a thorough search of the area K9 Rio alerted on a hidden rifle and shell casings believed to be used in the crime.



In October 2020, Game Warden Charles Follin observed multiple discrepancies in reporting and tagging at a local deer processor involving a 16pt antlered deer in Coweta County. After a lengthy investigation including multiple search warrants of phones and residences, interviews, and evidence collection it was determined that the hunter was utilizing his elderly father's free lifetime hunting license. The hunter himself did not possess a license and had also reported multiple other antlered and antlerless deer on his father's license earlier in the season and the previous season. The hunter was charged with multiple license violations, two counts of violation of harvest recording requirements, and interference with a Game Wardens duty.

Region II- Gainesville

The Gainesville Region is comprised of 26 Northeast Georgia Counties which include part of the metro Atlanta area. Within these counties are 10 major impoundments, three major rivers, 16 Wildlife Management Areas, 220 miles of trout streams, 23 State Park Properties, and 328,500 acres of National Forest lands. The impoundments receive over 20 million visitors annually while the state parks and WMA's receive another three million. The tremendous amount of visitation and use on these properties, as well as private property usage, creates a great deal of diverse law enforcement issues that the 35 Game Wardens of this region continually address.

Promotions and Personnel Changes

GW1 Jared Wood promoted to GW2, GW1 Jeffery Turner promoted to GW2, GW2 Jonathan Segars promoted to GWFC1, GW2 Ryan Locke promoted to GWFC1, GW2 Shane Brown promoted to GWFC1, GWFC1 Kevin Goss promoted to GWFC2, GWFC1 Brandon Pierce promoted to GWFC2, GW1 Savannah Miller promoted to GW2, GW2 Matt Johnson promoted to GWFC1, GW1 Chandler Hamrick promoted to GW2, GW2 Beth Gilbert promoted to GWFC1, GW2 Dan Schay promoted to GWFC1, GW1 Ryan Cleveland promoted to GW2, and GW1 Bryan Price promoted to GW2. GW Tommy Crabb Retired on September 1, 2019, GWFC Chad Chambers Retired on April 1, 2020, and GWFC David Webb transferred from Towns County to Upson County.

Personnel Awards

Game Warden Ryan Locke was the Region II Game Warden of the Year and the LED State Game Warden of the Year, Cpl. Craig Fulghum was the Region II Boating Safety Officer of the Year, Game Warden Joe Hill was the Region II Investigative Game Warden of the Year and the LED State Investigative Game Warden of the Year.

Operational

Captain Elrod served as OIC during the riots and protests several times, including the metro Atlanta area and Stone Mountain. He led from the front and served side by side with his men, holding the line, while bricks, rocks, and obscenities rained down on them.

Cpl. Anne Wiley responded to a complaint at Dukes Creek on Smithgall Woods in White County on May 4, 2020, where an individual was cast netting trout from the creek. Cpl. Wiley discovered three individuals along the creek and one of them was in possession of a cast net and 34 trout. None of them possessed a fishing rod, fishing license or trout license. This stretch of the creek also requires a permit to fish and none of them had that either. Citations were issued in the incident. The fish were confiscated and given to a family in need.



Sgt. Dillard's Work Unit - In November 2019, Corporal Tim Vickery received a call from an officer with the Lavonia Police Department stating that a subject had gotten stuck in a right-of-way inside the city limits. The officer believed the subject to be hunting. Corporal Vickery met with the officer and talked to the subject, whom he knew from previous interactions. The subject denied hunting the property in question, although the truck was filled with hunting equipment. After a search of the vehicle, a rifle with an illegal silencer and a deer head were discovered. The deer was confiscated, and the rifle seized. Two other rifles were found, one of which had a night vision scope. The subject was released that night. A couple days later, Corporal Vickery obtained a search warrant for the subject's phone based on previous encounters and the fact that he had shown several dead deer pictures from his phone to an assisting officer on the scene of the initial incident. After interviewing the subject, his phone was seized with the warrant and taken to the GBI for analysis. After searching the phone and meeting with the District Attorney, 45 warrants were taken on the subject for charges including felony possession of an illegal silencer, hunting without permission, hunting without a license, recording and reporting requirements, taking over the season limit of antlered deer, hunting at night and hunting from a vehicle. Covid-19 has prevented a grand jury from being empaneled. The case is still pending.



Sgt. Brown's Work Unit - Game Wardens worked the Georgia Outdoor News Blast at the Gwinnett Infinite Energy Center where they interacted with most of the attendees. Citizens from all over the state had their questions answered and were able to learn more of our duties and responsibilities.

Sgt. Lee Brown and Cpl. Eddie Tompkins assisted Cpl. Eric Isom and GW Jeffery Turner with a BUI suspect on Lake Lanier. When Sgt. Brown and Cpl. Tompkins arrived, the subject was in the water and uncooperative. Several attempts were made to get him into the boat, unsuccessfully. The subject was struggling to stay afloat and Sgt. Brown entered the water to try and rescue him. While trying to do this the subject hit Sgt. Brown and swam away from him. Sgt. Brown followed him to the shore where the subject was arrested and transported to the Hall County Detention Center.

Game Wardens patrolled Chestatee WMA for the first "Bear Dog Hunt" in North Georgia. This hunt was very successful. There were not any issues with the hunters and the success rate was high.

Game Wardens assisted the City of Dahlonega, the Lumpkin County Sheriff's Office, and other local, state, and federal agencies with a "Rally" in downtown Dahlonega. The Game Wardens primary duties were to protect the Dahlonega Gold Museum which was done without incident.



On the opening day of the 2019 archery season, Cpl. Eddie Tompkins and Game Warden First Class Shane Brown started an investigation into a subject that was running an illegal guide service. This investigation took about a year to complete. A total of 83 warrants were taken out as a result of this investigation. Game Wardens from Regions I and II worked together spending over 500 hours investigating this case.

Game Wardens patrolled Fort Yargo and Panola Mountain State Parks during the peak of Covid-19. The number of users at these parks drastically increased during this period. On numerous occasions Fort Yargo State Park was shut down due to the park being at capacity. With Game Wardens assisting the park staff no major issues occurred.

Sgt. Brown's work unit welcomed a new Game Warden. Game Warden Taylor Gilmore was hired and assigned to Dekalb and Rockdale Counties. She completed the Game Warden Academy and is currently in Field Training under the supervision Cpl. Kevin Godbee and GWFC Dan Schay who are Field Training Officers.

Sgt. Roberson's Work Unit - Game Wardens from Sgt Jason Roberson's work section had a very busy year. They are tasked with managing Hall, Jackson, Banks, and Barrow Counties and are responsible for working boating safety on Lake Lanier. This section always proves to be a high activity area and this year was no exception. The work section saw an unusual amount of personnel changes during the past year. Game Warden Dan Schay transferred into the section in November and was assigned to Barrow County. Game Warden Jared Wood transferred into the section and was assigned to Hall County in January. Due to budget reductions, the work section changed. Forsyth County was added to the section and Barrow County was removed. Game Warden Savanna Miller came to the section with Forsyth County and Jared Wood transferred to a vacant position in the Mountain work unit. Cpl. Eric Isom transferred to his home county of Harris, Cpl. Loudermilk promoted to Admin Sgt, and Game Warden Chandler Hamrick transferred into Hall County from the coast. Even with this turnover, the men and women still got the job done. They nearly doubled their production of BUI arrests finishing with 84, worked five drownings, investigated 26 boating incidents, completed several poaching related investigations, and patrolled Mossy Creek, Don Carter, and Fort Yargo State Parks.

Game Warden Ryan Lock had an outstanding year. He began an in-depth investigation into a night hunting ring that contained multiple subjects. This investigation unveiled twenty illegally taken bucks and resulted in the confiscation of twelve trophy bucks. Fifty-six charges were made on seven individuals. These charges included hunting deer at night, hunting from a vehicle, hunting from a public road, possession of over the limit, and numerous other violations.

Corporal Adam Loudermilk organized a youth deer hunt in Banks County. This hunt takes place on property owned by Banks County and allows the area youth an opportunity to hunt after first writing an essay that details their reason for attending. This past year twenty hunters participated and were able to harvest fourteen deer.

Game Warden Locke was also recognized as the 2020 State of Georgia Game Warden of the Year.

Sgt. Patterson's Work Unit - Cpl. Tim Butler (Oconee County) GWFC Phillip Nelson (Oglethorpe County) GWFC Mark Stephens (Clarke County) GWFC Shane Sartor (Elbert County) and Sgt. Mark Patterson transitioned to Region II Gainesville as part of the Division restructuring. Cpl. Craig Fulghum was the Region II Boating Safety Officer of the Year

The work section assisted with annual Outdoor Dream Foundation duck hunt at Skeeter Branch Shooting Preserve in Hart County serving as guides and mentors to children with terminal illnesses.

Members of the work unit were part of the CAT Teams that responded to Murray County to assist after a tornado touched down causing significant damage. They also responded to Tugaloo State Park to assist the State Parks and Historic Site Division with a tornado that touched down there.

Game Wardens assisted with the protest/riot security details in Atlanta, Stone Mountain, Athens, and Hartwell. Several also deployed during Hurricane Dorian to assist local agencies and citizens.

COVID-19 Response – Game Wardens worked Hard Labor Creek State Park providing security, conducted medical relays of much needed PPE to various locations all over the state, enforced the Governor’s Executive Order and performed compliance patrols on state properties.

GW Ryan Cleveland attended Swift Water Boat Operators Course.

GWFC Phillip Nelson participated in sonar searches on Lake Hartwell and Lake Lanier as a sonar operator.

Sgt. Seitz’s Work Unit - Game Warden Joe Hill was the Region II Investigative Game Warden of the Year and then was awarded the State Investigative Game Warden of the Year. Game Warden Hill worked a four-month long investigation involving a major wildlife violator in two Georgia counties and Florida. Game Warden Hill’s aggressive investigating resulted in 44 arrest warrants taken out on the subject. Several of the charges were convicted felon with a firearm, hunting without a license and hunting without a big game license and many other charges. The subject pled to a few of the charges but was convicted on others and served some jail time. He was also placed on probation and lost his hunting privileges for six years.

Game Wardens Matt Johnson and Shane Brown had received complaints of hunting deer at night early in the year. Their efforts to catch someone were not successful. After the hunting season had ended Game Warden Johnson received a complaint about a deer that had been shot in March. Game Warden Johnson worked the complaint and was able to catch the subject who shot the deer. The subject was charged for hunting deer at night and other charges. This is believed to be the subject that was hunting at night on the complaint earlier in the year.

Game Warden Johnson spends many hours working Dawson Forest WMA. During some of these patrols he has caught subjects cutting fences, spraying graffiti, and tearing up roads and damaging gates. These subjects that Game Warden Johnson have caught have been charged with damaging department property, criminal trespass, and other charges.



Other Activity

Game Wardens participated in “Operation Shut Gate” logging numerous hours worked that led to the arrest of subjects that were stealing guns, equipment, and other items from WMA’s across the state.

Region II sent Game Wardens to Hurricane Dorian that was threatening the Georgia Coast.

Region II sent Game Wardens to Murray County in Region I to assist with a tornado that hit that community.

Region III- Thomson

The Region III Law Enforcement Division is comprised of twenty-eight counties from East Central Georgia to the Piedmont. Within the region, there are twenty-three Wildlife Management Areas, 3 VPS's (voluntary public access), nine State Parks, three Public Fishing Areas, three Public Dove Fields. Region III is home to Clarks Hill Lake, Lake Sinclair, Lake Juliette, Lake Tobesofkee, Lake Jackson and Lake Oconee. River systems include the Savannah River, Ogeechee River, Oconee River, Apalachee River, and the Ohoopsee river. 34 post certified Game Wardens, one Administrative Assistant and a part-time secretary are assigned to the region.

Promotions & Personnel Changes

Region III welcomed GW Taylor Bingham to fill the Burke County position & Rainee Rowell as part time secretary. Sgt. Max Boswell retired after 30 years with the LED. Cpl. Ryan Swain retired with 24 years. GW Cpl. Robert Stillwell and GW Chris Adkins resigned. GWFC David Fisher was promoted to Cpl. GW Kevin Hurley, Jason Bennett and Erin McDade promoted to GW2. GWFC Jeremy Reese came back to the field as the Jasper County GW after a detachment to IU. GW Bobby Timmerman promoted to Corporal. Sgt. Brian Hobbins returned to Region III from Region IV.

Region III Personnel Awards

Cpl. Bubba Stanford 2020 NWTF Game Warden of the year.
Cpl. David Fisher 2019 Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Game Warden of the year.
GWFC Josh Cockrell 2019 DNR Hunter Education Instructor of the year.
Cpl. Derrell Worth Reg. 3 2019 NWTF Officer of the year.
John Rhodes the Region 2019 Boating Officer of the year, 2020 Torch Award Nominee, and the 2020 Game Warden of the year.

In the Community

During the beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic, GW's assisted other state/local agencies with transporting and delivering medical supplies and equipment. They delivered ventilators, PPE, hand sanitizer and a Triage tent to a local hospital.



GW's presented programs to the public in local schools, sportsman's groups, the Perry Ag Center (Buckarama and Turkeyrama) and the Warner Robbin AFB. These programs ranged from recruiting future Game Wardens to answering general questions from the public.

Several Region III GW's assisted with state/local protests in Atl, Athens, and Louisville.



Helping Hand

In June, GW Levi Thompson received a call-in reference to stranded boaters on the Ocmulgee River in Butts County. Utilizing Swiftwater gear he made his way across the river to help the elderly couple safely back to land.

GW's deployed for hurricane and tornado details & assisted with search & rescue. GWFC David Webb, Sgt. Sweat, Cpl. Tony Wynne & GWFC Jeremy Reese assisted with welfare checks, traffic control, & clearing debris from the roadway after a tornado rated at an EF-3 in Upson County.



GW William L. Smith located an abandoned vehicle in the ditch in the Danburg area of Wilkes County. When he ran the car tag through the computer it came back registered to a female subject that had been reported missing in Lamar County. The subject had dementia & had been missing for a week. Game Wardens, Aviation, Wilkes SO, Wilkes EMA, & volunteers were involved in the search of the area for two days before the woman was found. While in the helicopter, GW Smith and Lt. Robert Steht located the deceased woman approximately one mile from her vehicle in a wooded area.

Hunting & Fishing Activity

While patrolling for dove hunting activity in early September, GWFC Nolan Callaway located a morning dove shoot. Callaway looked around the area & found bags of birds hidden. At the conclusion of his investigation, Callaway determined that at least four of the hunters had taken over their daily limit. Those four individuals were charged with taking over the daily limit. The 118 doves were confiscated & donated to a church.



GWFC Cowart responded to a hunting without permission complaint in Warren County. Upon arrival, Cowart inspected the vehicle that was parked on the property & noticed hunting related items in the vehicle. While exiting the woods the trespasser saw Cowart & fled on foot. Sgt. Garthright, Cpl. Boles, & GW Smith responded to assist Cowart along with Warren County S.O., GSP, & MCCD. A department of corrections K-9 officer was called to assist. It was believed that the suspect had been picked up. GW's took inventory of his vehicle & had it towed & secured. During the search, GW's located marijuana & meth inside the vehicle. The four GW's visited the suspect's house later that night & could not locate suspect. GW's interviewed his son and he admitted to picking up his dad on the road. The next morning, the suspect called Wardens apologizing & wanting to meet. The suspect met Cowart at the R3 office & was interviewed. The suspect was arrested, and warrants were secured for Hunting Without Permission, Hunting Without Florescent Orange, Obstruction of a Law Enforcement Officer, Possession of Marijuana Less than one ounce, & Possession of Methamphetamine.

Cpl. Derrell Worth had an outstanding enforcement year for the 2020 turkey season. He spent many hours looking for bait & working investigations. He also used trail cameras to monitor areas in order to prioritize his time amidst patrols for executive order. Worth documented 10 hunting big game over bait contacts. In addition to those charges, he documented seven license violations and five hunting without permission.

While checking one baited property, Worth discovered that a turkey had been killed over bait. He worked an investigation into the illegal kill and was able to determine which club member took the turkey. Later in the season, Worth was able to contact the hunter and interview him, getting a confession out of the hunter.

Cpl. Ricky Boles responded to a night hunting complaint in North Morgan County. Boles was able to locate an individual cleaning a deer at the rear of his house. Boles determined that the individual shot the deer at night from his back porch. While working this investigation, Boles located several deer heads of recently killed bucks. While questioning the individual about those deer, Boles learned that the deer were killed during daylight hours by two non-resident hunters. Neither of these hunters had license to hunt in Georgia. Boles made phone contact with these two non-residents hunters & interviewed them. The one individual was charged with Hunting Deer at Night. The other two were charged with non-resident hunting without license and non-resident hunting without big game license.

Cpl. Ricky Boles provided a two-day ride a-long opportunity to Skyler Redmond, who works at the Charlie Elliott gun range. He is very interested in becoming a Game Warden with the Law Enforcement Division. During the ride-a-long, Cpl. Boles discovered that Skyler was a big duck hunter, but had never deer hunted & had never killed a deer. Boles set up a deer hunt with Skyler & guided him on an experience he will never forget. Skyler was able to harvest his first deer, a nine pointer.



GW John Rhodes investigated a complaint of a subject taking over the limit of antlered deer during the 2018-2019 season. He utilized all available resources to investigate this complaint & uncover evidence from a year ago. He learned that the individual uses one taxidermist for all his wildlife mounts. Rhodes visited this taxidermist & did a routine inspection. He learned that not only did the suspected violator have deer at this taxidermist shop, but so did the complainant. The complainant did not have any license to hunt deer during the season in question. Rhodes visited with the taxidermist on 4 occasions, gathered as much information from the complainant as possible, interviewed suspect & complainant, and pulled evidence off social media. At the conclusion of his investigation, Rhodes had enough evidence to charge complainant & suspect. He charged the complainant with hunting w/o license, hunting w/o big game license, and failure to report deer harvest. The complainant's deer was confiscated. The suspect was charged with taking over the limit of antlered deer & failure to report deer harvest. One 8-point buck rack was confiscated from the suspect.



On April 9, 2020, Cpl. Tony Wynne received a call asking for assistance in recovering an ATV & other items stolen from his property in Monroe County. Cpl. Wynne and GW Cadet Ryan Buice located and followed tracks from the scene. After an extensive search of the area the ATV was located along with several burglary tools.

In early spring Sgt. Travis Sweat was notified of a rash of break-ins on the cash box at High Falls State Park's Buck Creek boat ramp. Two Spartan cell cameras were placed in the area to track the influx of customers & try to identify the suspect. Several photos were obtained and a suspect was identified. After several days Cpl. Wil Smith caught the suspect in the act and placed him under arrest.

On November 25, 2019, Cpl. Wil Smith received two screenshots from social media that showed a suspect posing with three harvested antlered deer. According to the posts, the suspect claimed to have killed all three. Two deer, a 6-point, & an 8-point were killed on Oct. 23rd & the third, a 10-point, was killed on Nov. 24th. Cpl. Smith began an investigation by going to the local deer cooler & reviewing the records. Cpl. Smith found that the suspect had checked in three antlered bucks on the corresponding dates. A check of the DNR Game Check system revealed the suspect had checked only one antlered buck as of November 25th. Smith went to the suspects residence & interviewed him. The suspect initially claimed that he had killed one deer on October 23rd & "found" the second deer in his yard & it appeared to have been struck by a car. The suspect altered his story & claimed the deer appeared to have been shot and struck by a car. Smith confronted the suspect with the social media posts & the texts that claimed he killed both & one was in memory of his father. A confession was obtained, and the suspect was charged with taking over the limit of antlered deer. The 10 point was seized, and appropriate charges were made. The meat from the seized deer was donated to the Ocmulgee Branch of QDMA (a nonprofit organization) & used to feed homeless citizens in the area.



March 2020 Nebraska Game Warden Brandon O'neill reached out to GW Levi Thompson & GW Jeremy Reese regarding a resident of Jasper County. The resident allegedly harvested a mule deer the year prior without having a special permit for the animal. Thompson, Reese, & O'Neill did a thorough investigation & in the end all the parties involved were charged. The resident plead guilty to all charges & the mule deer buck was seized for educational purposes.



All game wardens are involved with collateral duties. Sgt. Hobbins continued his role as a Firearms Instructor. Cpl. Payne continues to be a member of the Honor Guard. Cpl. Billips became a POST Instructor, taught in the Advanced Game Warden Academy, and is a member of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT). Finally, GW Paulk joined the Special Operation Group (SOG).

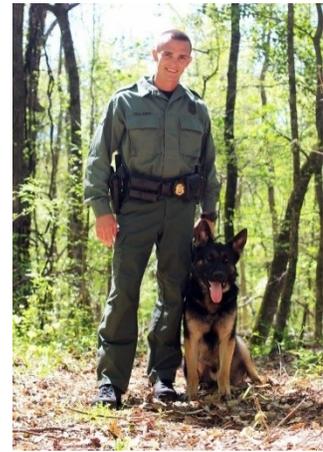


Corporal Billips, received a complaint of night hunting on Cox Place Road in Burke County. The complainant owns property on Cox Place Road & said his renter called him about a rifle shot being fired at approximately 5:30 AM from the road nearby. Cpl. Payne arrived at the scene and discovered evidence consistent with a White-tailed deer being shot from the road, dragged from the edge of the woods, & loaded into a vehicle. Cpl. Payne noted at least two distinct boot tracks associated with dragging the deer to the vehicle.

On October 13, 2019 the complainant called Cpl. Billips & said a rifle shot had been fired from a truck on Cox Place Road at approximately 6:40 AM. Sunrise for this date was 7:30 AM. Carswell said he was in his deer stand & could see a spotlight being shined from a vehicle and then a rifle shot was fired. arrived on scene at approximately 7:35 AM. As Cpl. Billips was talking with the complainant, a maroon Nissan Frontier truck approached from the direction of Botsford Church Road. The Frontier turned left on Thomson Bridge Road & Billips attempted to catch up to the truck. Billips caught up with the vehicle & initiated a vehicle stop. Three subjects were in the truck. All three worked at as pipe fitters at Plant Vogtle. Two were Florida residents & one Alabama resident. A loaded bolt action rifle was lying beside the passenger. In the bed of the truck was a large amount of blood covering the entire bed, tailgate, & rear bumper along with white-tailed deer hair scattered on the bed. After questioning the subjects admitted to killing a deer that morning as well as the morning of the earlier complaint.



GWFC Nolan Callaway became one of the Division's newest K-9 Officers. He received his K-9, Judge in January. Callaway & K-9 Judge underwent weeks of training & graduated the K-9 Academy. Since then, they have assisted local agencies with searches for missing persons & articles searches. They have also helped other Game Wardens uncover evidence during wildlife enforcement investigations.



Cpl. Bobby Timmerman received a hunting without permission complaint in Columbia County during deer season. After meeting the complainant, he investigated the area & located deer bait. He checked the area numerous times without locating the violator. A camera was deployed. It was activated after dark a couple weeks later by an individual going into hunt. Cpl. Timmerman, GW Saxon Campbell, & GW Jared Wood responded to the scene & located the subject hunting deer with a .22 caliber rifle. He was charged with Hunting Deer at Night, Hunting W/O Permission, Hunting with Illegal Weapon, & Hunting Big Game Over Bait.

Cpl. Ryan Swain had an informant notify him of an illegal chicken fight in progress in Lincoln County. Cpl. Swain notified Lincoln County Sheriff's Office Major & retired DNR LED Sgt. Jim Wallen with the information. Five Lincoln County Deputies & Swain raided the address & found the fights under way. Forty-four people were arrested, and \$16,000.00 dollars was confiscated. Thirty federal indictments have been levied against these defendants for various charges including Cruelty to Animals, Gambling, etc. Section members also responded to Emanuel County to assist federal agencies with Operation Sunrise, the name given to another illegal chicken fighting case.

GW's made a concerted effort to locate traps this year. GW Osborne located one trap line in Lincoln County & GW Adkins located four trap lines in Columbia County. Trappers responsible for four of the five lines were apprehended and charged with 13 violations. These included Trapping W/O a License (3), Trapping W/O Permission (2), Failure to Tag Traps (4), Failure to Check within 24 Hours (2), Oversized Traps, & Failure to Carry Choke stick.

Region III GW's arrested 31 operators for BUI, responded to and investigated 22 boat incidents and worked 6 drownings.



Region IV- Metter

In January 2020, the Law Enforcement Division streamlined field operations and closed the Macon Region office. The Metter Region changed from Region VI to Region IV. During realignments of the Regions, Region IV went from covering 32 counties to covering 27 counties. The Metter Region now covers over 10,000 square miles of land mass and stretches from the Savannah River to Interstate 75. The Region IV Game Wardens patrol over 121,000 square acres of public land that includes five state parks, seventeen WMA properties, three PFA properties, multiple VPA properties and Department of Corrections dove fields.

Personnel

The Metter office has a few new faces. Captain Scott Kling retired in 2019. Administrative Sergeant Chris Moore filled a vacant Sergeant position in the field. The office is now under the supervision of Captain Bob Lynn, who transferred from the Brunswick Region Office. The Administrative Sergeant position was filled by Kevin Joyce. Administrative Assistant 2 April Thrift, and Secretary Christina Colquitt continue to provide customer service to the Region's field staff and public.

Personnel Changes

With the realignment of regions, field personnel were lost and gained when the counties they are assigned to were placed in their new regions.

Retirements

Captain Scott Klingel retired from the Metter Region Supervisor.
GWFC Allen Mills retired from his Dodge County assignment.

New Hire

GW Hunter Rush assigned to Laurens County.

Promotions

GWFC Patrick Gibbs promoted to Corporal.
GWFC Rodney Horne promoted to Corporal.
Corporal Kevin Joyce promoted to Administrative Sergeant.

Region Personnel Awards

GWFC Bobby Sanders Region IV Ranger of the Year.
GW Cameron Dyal Region IV Torch Award and Boating Safety Officer of the Year.
GWFC Randell Meeks Region IV Hunter Education Instructor of the Year.

State Personnel Awards

GWFC Randell Meeks Hunter Education Instructor of the Year.

The versatility of a Game Warden

As in years past, Region IV wardens were used for natural disasters response. Wardens were staged and ready when Hurricane Dorian brushed the coast of Georgia. Thankfully, there was minimum damage to the state. Then with the new year of 2020, new unforeseen problems arose. A global pandemic became the biggest challenge for all Americans. Region wardens answered the call by assisting in delivering and relaying medical supplies across the state. Wardens were also asked to be a constant presence on state owned lands. Wardens were there to guide the public in understanding Governor Kemp's executive orders. Those orders were in effect for most of spring and summer. Wardens also increased patrols of the rivers in the region. Region Wardens also responded across the state to assist with other DNR facilities where the heaviest visitation was seen such as state parks located in the Atlanta metro area.

In late spring nationwide civil unrest started. Protests happened in several areas of the state. Region IV wardens responded to Atlanta, Savannah, and Stone Mountain along with many other law enforcement agencies. Wardens also responded to several protest in the region and assisted the local law enforcement agencies that requested help. The wardens' abilities to use all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) to cover long distances and to respond quickly became an asset.

Our K-9 Officers also assist in showing the warden's versatility. GWFC Jack Thain has responded to numerous requests for K-9 with K-9 Case. Among the results of these calls are the recovery of 7 stolen firearms. A subject that cut himself breaking into his residence fled the scene due to family violence and it was believed he may bleed out. The subject was located by K-9 Case in a nearby field. A man running from Law Enforcement to avoid a DUI was tracked and recovered by K-9 Case. K-9 Case was used in the case of an elderly man was missing for more than 24 hours. The elderly man was recovered alive in an area that K-9 Case had not yet cleared and had been ruled as a last option for search efforts.

Turkey Season

Turkey season of 2020 took an unusual turn as the season began. Wardens' attention was diverted to dealing with COVID 19 and assisting with the challenges that came with it.

Night Hunting

With large tracts of timber and agriculture fields being crisscrossed by dirt roads and county maintained paved roads in mainly rural settings, poachers have ample areas to violate the law by night hunting. Region IV Wardens successfully caught 57 groups of violators. Stops for night hunting violations often lead to other criminal violations.



Corporal Patrick Gibbs conducted a stop for illegal night hunting activity in Evans County. The stop also led to charges that included drugs and alcohol.

Corporal Tim Hutto and GW Luke Rabun stopped a vehicle that attempted to flee a night hunting stop in Coffee County. In their possession was two glass jars of clear liquid suspected to be moonshine, and a drug related object used to smoke methamphetamine. The duo was charged with multiple charges including hunting under the influence, fleeing and attempting to elude, and many other traffic related offenses. The driver was also wanted for burglarizing a convenience store in Coffee County.



Investigations

As in the past, Region IV Game Wardens have been successful at using tips from the Ranger Hotline and social media platforms such as FaceBook, Instagram and SnapChat along with boots on the ground experience to investigate fish and game violations.



GWFC Randell Meeks completed an investigation in Treutlen County that started with a complaint about a video on social media that shows a total of 62 waterfowl lined up after a shoot. After obtaining data through warrants, GWFC Meeks was able to identify all the persons involved in the illegal waterfowl hunting activity. GWFC Meeks interviewed the participants who admitted to shooting the waterfowl after hours.

GWFC Jack Thain began an investigation on two subjects digging artifacts on Tuckahoe WMA. After identifying one of the suspects, Sgt. Shaymus McNeely, GWFC Jason Miller and GWFC Thain were able to interview the suspects. Both suspects admitted to digging artifacts on Tuckahoe WMA. The case yielded 9 boxes of flaked stone tools being confiscated. Charges included theft by taking, entering a WMA without a land pass, excavation of artifacts on state property, possession of methamphetamine and marijuana, and driving while suspended and without a registration.



GWFC Clint Jarriel initiated an investigation in Tattnall County that determined a trophy buck was taken without a license. The subject was interviewed and written a citation for hunting big game without a big game license. This deer was killed and entered into a big buck contest for which it would have been the winner.



Corporal Tim Hutto started an investigation into a carcass dump complaint in Atkinson County. GW Luke Rabun completed the investigation and executed arrest warrants on a suspect for charges including possession of firearms by convicted felon, hunting without permission, hunting without a license, hunting without big game license, and hunting without florescent orange. Upon interviewing the suspect, GW Rabun learned that the suspect also took camera from the dump site. GW Luke Rabun was able to locate the stolen camera and return it to its rightful owner. The suspect was subsequently charged with theft by taking.



Corporal Dan Stiles completed an investigation in Wheeler County. Two individuals were interviewed. Two racks were confiscated. Charges included hunting without a license, hunting without a big game license and failure to record.



After receiving information from the Oconee Drug Task Force, Corporal Dan Stiles and GW Austin Biggers did an investigation into the turkey fans and deer head. All were confiscated and the subject was charged with failure to record harvest.

Waterfowl

Region IV has many miles of creeks and rivers that flood the coastal plains and creates fantastic duck habitats. Along with the natural habitat and farm ponds that dot the landscape, ducks have many options on where to go. That also is a challenge for the wardens since the duck hunters are scattered out and in many instances are in remote nearly inaccessible locations. Even with those challenges, Region wardens recorded 45 contacts with duck hunters.



Corporal Tim Hutto, K-9 Titan and GW Luke Rabun worked a duck shoot in Coffee County. With the help of K-9 Titan, four duck hunters with 20 illegally taken ducks were in a pond that was baited with corn and molasses. Ten citations and warnings were issued for hunting ducks over bait, possession over the daily limit of ducks and license violations.

Corporal Patrick Gibbs and GWFC Bobby Sanders with confiscated ducks taken from a baited shoot in Appling County on the Altamaha River.



Protecting the resources on state lands

Patrolling state-owned lands became a priority during the spring as DNR lands were one of the few recreational avenues for the citizens of the state that was open during COVID 19. Wardens patrolled for violations of the Governor's Executive Orders along with normal patrol of these lands. WMA's in the southern section of the region continues to have people illegally picking Palmetto berries.



Illegally picked Palmetto berries seized at Alapaha River WMA July 2019. (Left to right) GW John Kennedy, GW Thomas Sibley, Corporal Tim Hutto and GW Luke Rabun.

On August 19, 2019 Game Wardens Chris Thompson and Austin Biggers were patrolling Alapaha River Wildlife Management Area when they came across a pickup truck that had been gathering Palmetto Berries. Game Wardens stopped the truck and several subjects ran into the woods of the WMA. K9 Officer Greg Wade was called to assist in the search of the subjects at large. Fourteen bags of Palmetto Berries along with other supplies were confiscated as evidence and three subjects were arrested for theft by taking and criminal trespass.



Community Involvement

The Game Warden's most valuable asset is the community that he/she serves. Wardens teach hunter safety courses in their communities at least three times per year. Wardens also attend career days at local schools to recruit the next generation of wardens. Wardens also participate in National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) events to get to know their local hunters. While COVID 19 guidelines postponed many events and reduced the size of others, wardens continue to serve their communities.

Game Wardens from Sergeant Morty Wood's work section participates in JAKE'S Day at Paradise PFA.



Region V- Albany

The Region V Law Enforcement Division is comprised of thirty-one counties in the southwest portion of the state with the headquarters located in Albany. Within the region there are seven large reservoirs, two major rivers, a multitude of smaller streams, eighteen wildlife management areas, two Public Fishing Areas, nine State Parks, Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, and Ft. Benning Military Base.

Currently, the region has twenty-seven POST certified Game Wardens, with twenty-five assigned field duties, and Captain Rick Sellars and Sergeant Quinn Fogle assigned administrative responsibilities. The region also has two non-sworn administrative staff, Cindy Hynote the Administrative Assistant III, and part time secretary Jessica Jewell.



L to R: Sgt. Quinn Fogle, AOC Cindy Hynote, Secretary Jessica Jewell, and Captain Rick Sellars

The Region's 31 counties are divided into 5 work units:

Lake Blackshear Work Section



L to R: GW Logan South, GW Blake Chafin, Sgt. Al Greer, Cpl. Jesse Harrison, GW Stetson Stevens. R Picture: Cpl. Clint Martin

The new Region V realignment changed Sergeant Greer's section from 8 counties to 6 counties. These include Crisp, Dooley, Macon, Lee, Sumter, and Schley Counties. Sgt. Greer's section also includes Lake Blackshear, Georgia Veterans State Park, Flint River WMA, Montezuma Bluff WMA, and the Cordele Fish Hatchery. The Game Wardens who cover this area are Corporal Clint Martin, Corporal Jesse Harrison, Game Wardens Logan South, Stetson Stevens, and Blake Chafin. Blake and Stetson both graduated from the 33rd Game Warden Academy last year.

The work section spent over 1,000 hours working citizen complaints this year. The section issued 574 total violator contacts, worked three boating incidents, and one hunting incident. The section charged nine people for hunting deer at night and charged eight subjects with boating under the influence.



GW Stetson Stevens with confiscated deer antlers

Game Warden Stetson Stevens and Corporal Jesse Harrison received information about a subject taking over the limit of bucks. A local sporting goods store posted pictures of a subject on their Facebook page with two bucks he shot on the same weekend. Upon further investigation, it was discovered the subject had posted another buck he had already killed earlier in the season. Game Warden Stevens and Corporal Harrison met with the subject and the 3 European mounts were confiscated. The subject was cited for taking over the bag limit and failure to record harvest.

Game Warden Logan South received information about a subject hunting without permission. He learned the subject posted the picture with him holding the deer on social media. Game Warden South interviewed the subject and cited him for several hunting violations. Later that same month Game Warden South learned the subject had killed another deer without permission and the subject was cited again for several hunting violations.

Corporal Jesse Harrison, Game Wardens Blake Chafin, Logan South, and Stetson Stevens located a baited dove field. The six subjects were cited for hunting over bait, two subjects were charged with taking over the bag limit and 125 doves were confiscated.



Corporal Clint Martin and Game Warden Blake Chafin were working night deer hunting and observed a vehicle using a light bar to illuminate a field. A subject in the vehicle fired 2 shots into the field. A traffic stop was conducted, and the 3 subjects were charged with several hunting violations.

Lake Seminole Work Section

The Seminole work unit shares its borders with the states of Florida and Alabama. It is comprised of Seminole, Decatur, Grady, Early, Miller, and Baker Counties. It includes the 37,500-acre reservoir Lake Seminole, the new Tired Creek Reservoir, and approximately 100 miles of the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers.



L to R: Sgt. Tony Cox, Cpl. Steve Thomas, GW Taylor Brown, and GW KP Boatright



GW KP Boatright with confiscated alligator that was illegally killed while subjects were hunting waterfowl

The Seminole Work unit has experienced several personnel changes throughout the past year. With the Region realignment, Game Warden Drew Beverly, who is assigned to Mitchell County, was moved to another work unit. Cpl. Quinn Fogle was recently promoted to Administrative Sergeant and assigned to the Albany office. Game Warden Greg Castelli transferred to Harris County. G.W. Keith Boatright recently completed the 34th Game Warden Academy in August of 2020 and joined the unit after graduating. G.W. Boatright has been assigned to Seminole County.

During FY 2020, Corporal Quinn Fogle was selected as the 2019 Game Warden of the Year. Cpl. Steve Thomas was selected as the Region V Investigative Game Warden for an investigation on a night deer hunter that killed 18 deer illegally in three states and five counties in Georgia. When Cpl. Thomas concluded his investigation, two search warrants and 62 arrest warrants were obtained for the subject. Cpl. Thomas was also selected for the Region V NWTf Award. Game Warden Taylor Brown was selected for Region V Torch Award.

Sgt. Tony Cox, Cpl. Steve Thomas, G.W. Keith Boatright, and G.W. Taylor Brown spent 403 hours working 64 complaints. Investigations into these complaints lead to the arrest of 23 persons for offenses that included fishing and hunting without permission, night deer hunting, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, possession of meth-amphetamine, Hunting Alligator out of season, and the possession of wildlife without a permit. During the hunting season, they arrested 4 groups of night hunters consisting of 9 individuals, flagged 3 dove fields, cited



Sgt. Quinn Fogle and GW Taylor Brown with confiscated Ringnecks illegally taken over bait

hunters on 4 baited dove fields and confiscated 187 Dove. During waterfowl season, 62 violator contacts were made for waterfowl hunting violations. The Game Wardens apprehended hunters on 2 baited duck ponds and 1 after hours roost shoot. They confiscated 69 illegally taken ducks throughout the season. The Game Wardens worked 3 boating incidents, made 16 BUI arrests, and 7 BUI child endangerment charges were made on the combined waters of Lake Seminole, Spring Creek and the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers.

Albany Work Section



L to R: GW David Jones, Cpl. Eric White, Sgt. Greg Wade, K-9 "Cuff" and GW Drew Beverly

This work unit is comprised of Dougherty, Worth, Mitchell, Colquitt, Brooks and Thomas Counties. Some of the major waterways within these counties are Lake Worth, Kinchafoonee Creek, Muckalee Creek, Ochlocknee River, Flint River, and Little River. This section has 4 Wildlife Management Areas, including the largest in the region being Chickasawhatchee WMA at 19,700 acres. This section provides many opportunities for anglers, hunters, recreationalists, and boaters alike to enjoy the outdoors.

This section was one of the most heavily impacted areas for COVID-19. These Game Wardens assisted with logistical operations, delivering lifesaving equipment to medical facilities and Health Departments throughout the region. At the apex of the Covid-19 operations, all wardens in this section conducted security operations during the riots/protests in Atlanta.

This work unit has gone through several changes throughout the year. Sergeant David Ruddell was the field supervisor for most of the year. He recently retired with 30 years of service to the Division. Corporal Greg Wade was promoted to fill the vacant Sergeant position. Sgt. Wade is a 9-year veteran Game Warden with the Law Enforcement Division. Sergeant Wade is a DNR K-9 handler, FTO, SOG Member, a member of the DNR Investigative Unit, and a POST Instructor for Defensive Tactics and Tactical ATV operations.

Game Warden Eric White was recently promoted to Corporal after the retirement of Cpl. Tommy Daughtrey. Corporal White is a 7-year veteran Game Warden assigned to Colquitt County. Corporal White is a member of the Sonar Operation Unit. His activity included 12 subjects for hunting without permission, felony commercial dumping, 8 subjects fishing without permission, 3 subjects hunting deer at night, 8 subjects hunting over bait, one misuse of a firearm while hunting, 3 subjects for hunting alligators without a permit, and one BUI. Cpl. White investigated a hunting incident where 3 subjects were illegally hunting alligators and injured a bystander with an errant shot. Cpl. White and Game Warden Drew Beverly also conducted a search and rescue for a missing boater on the Flint River during hazardous conditions. The officers rescued the subject, who was clinging to a tree after his boat sank. He was transported to a nearby landing and reunited with his family.

Game Warden First Class David Jones is a 4-year veteran and is assigned to Thomas County. Warden Jones is a member of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) and SOG. His activity included 25 waterfowl related charges which earned him the Region V Rocky Wainwright Award nomination. He assisted the FBI, DEA, USDA, and other agencies with a raid of an illegal gamecock fighting operation in Emmanuel County. David investigated a hunting incident in Worth County where a subject sustained a gunshot wound while hog hunting. He also charged 1 subject for BUI on the Flint River. Warden Jones investigated an incident where a deer was shot on a plantation. This incident resulted in one subject being charged with hunting big game from a public road, hunting from a motor vehicle, and hunting without permission.

Game Warden Drew Beverly is a 1 ½ year veteran assigned to Mitchell County. He was recently transferred into the work section due to the Region realignment. Some of his activity included 2 subjects hunting without permission, 1 subject hunting while privileges are suspended, and possession of a wild animal without a permit (Wolf). Warden Beverly conducted an extensive investigation regarding a group of subjects illegally selling and trapping wildlife (Snakes and Alligators). His efforts resulted in 3 subjects being charged with 38 wildlife violations, as well as possession of marijuana with intent to distribute.

Columbus Work Section



Sergeant Bolen's section consists of Harris, Muscogee, Talbot, Taylor, Chattahoochee, and Marion Counties. The Game Wardens in this work unit patrol Lake Harding, Lake Oliver, and Goat Rock, along with several miles of the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers. Several state-owned properties are also located within the work section including eight Wildlife Management Areas, one Public Fishing Area, and one State Park.

L to R: GW Dean Gibson, Cpl. Josh Swain, Sgt. Jeremy Bolen, Cpl. Eric Isom, GW Greg Castelli, and GW Ryan Buice

Game Wardens assigned to this work unit are Cpl. Josh Swain, Cpl. Eric Isom (August 2020), Game Warden Dean Gibson, Game Warden Greg Castelli, and Game Warden Ryan Buice (July 2020). Cpl. Mitch Oliver was assigned here throughout most of the year until his recent promotion to Sergeant in Region 1.

Corporal Josh Swain is assigned to Taylor County and is one of the Region's sonar operators. Cpl. Swain travelled out of the section to assist other sections with searching for drowning victims. From July to September of 2019, Cpl. Swain worked an investigation which initially started as



Baited Duck Pond

someone posing as a DNR employee. Josh was able to take the information and execute a search warrant through the phone company to find out the phone number. Cpl. Swain took this information and sent it to the Investigative Unit. They were able to take the information and locate an individual who was believed to be breaking into WMA check stations. The suspect was later arrested and faces numerous felony charges. In November/December of 2019 and January of 2020, Cpl. Swain was out patrolling for waterfowl hunting activity. During the season, Josh checked 64 ponds for bait, apprehended hunters on 2 areas that were found to be baited and located a group that were hunting ducks out of season.

Game Warden Dean Gibson is currently assigned to Talbot County. Game Warden Gibson received the Region IV (Macon) Investigative Game Warden of the Year Award and the Region V Game Warden of the Year Award. In July of 2019 Game Warden Gibson was working an ongoing investigation from a pay box theft on FDR State Park. An individual was using a sticky adhesive on a coat hanger to steal money envelopes from Park pay boxes. Dean was able to identify a potential suspect based on surveillance camera pictures, which Gibson was monitoring frequently. The suspect's identity was discovered by Dean, as well as his place of employment. Dean organized a multi-work section surveillance detail to attempt to catch the thief. His operation plan was effective, and the subject was observed breaking into a pay box. The subject fled the scene, driving more than 100-mph in a 45-mph speed zone. A GSP Trooper ended the pursuit in the city limits of a nearby town. A total of 17 warrants, including 4 felony warrants were taken out on the subject in 2 separate court jurisdictions.



Evidence of paybox theft

In November of 2019, Gibson was working the quota deer hunt on the Hilliard tract of Chattahoochee Fall Line WMA in Marion County. A hunter reported seeing an illegal 6-point deer laying in the wood line. Dean diligently followed up on the information, went to the scene and located a shell casing and cigarette butts on the ground. After identifying a suspect, Gibson was able to obtain a confession from the hunter that shot the deer and left it, knowing that it was an illegal deer for the area. The subject was issued a citation for killing an illegal deer on a quality buck hunt. The deer was confiscated, and the meat was donated to a local food shelter.



Confiscated Buck



GW Greg Castelli with confiscated Turkey

Game Warden Greg Castelli is assigned to FDR State Park/Harris County. Castelli joined the work unit in December of 2019. In March of 2020, Sgt. Bolen and Game Warden Castelli were patrolling for turkey hunting activity in Talbot County. A couple of hunters were found to be hunting turkeys in the area. After a brief investigation, it was discovered that one of the hunters did not have any current hunting licenses. The hunter initially lied to the Game Wardens about the area that he was hunting because he was not 100% sure he had permission to be there. A DNR K-9 unit was called to the scene to discover where the hunter was hunting. Evidence was located where the turkey was killed, and all the violations were documented. Game Warden Castelli also checked a baited turkey blind in Marion County. Two hunters were located hunting over the baited area. Both hunters received citations for hunting big game over bait. Between April through June of 2020, Game Warden Castelli made 4 Boating Under the Influence of Alcohol cases on Lake Harding.

Work section Game Wardens responded to a total of 2 drownings and arrested 7 operators for Boating Under the Influence.

Lake Walter F. George Work Section



L to R: Cpl. Scott Carroll, Cpl. Steve Robinson, Sgt. Jim Atchley, GW Thomas Sibley, and GW Bo Townsend

The work section supervised by Sgt. Jim Atchley includes seven counties along the Georgia/Alabama border and includes Clay, Quitman, Stewart, Webster, Randolph, Terrell and Calhoun Counties. Corporals Scott Carroll and Steve Robinson have been the constant presence in this area for several years. Game Warden Thomas Sibley transferred into the work section in December 2019 and is assigned Calhoun County. Game Warden Bo Townsend recently graduated from the 34th Game Warden Academy and is assigned to Webster County.

In addition to patrols on 3 State Parks, 4 WMAs and Lake W.F. George for COVID 19 response and assisting with riot details in Atlanta, these officers successfully worked 8 significant investigations. Cpl. Robinson worked a 3-month investigation for illegal dumping by multiple individuals operating sewage pump out businesses. This resulted in individuals being charged with both felony and misdemeanor violations for unlawful dumping of egregious litter, criminal damage to property and criminal trespass. Cpl. Robinson also cited subjects for taking an alligator in Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge and confiscated one 13-foot alligator.



SPARTAN GC-Z4Gb2 M 04/22/2020 12:24:01 079°F P5

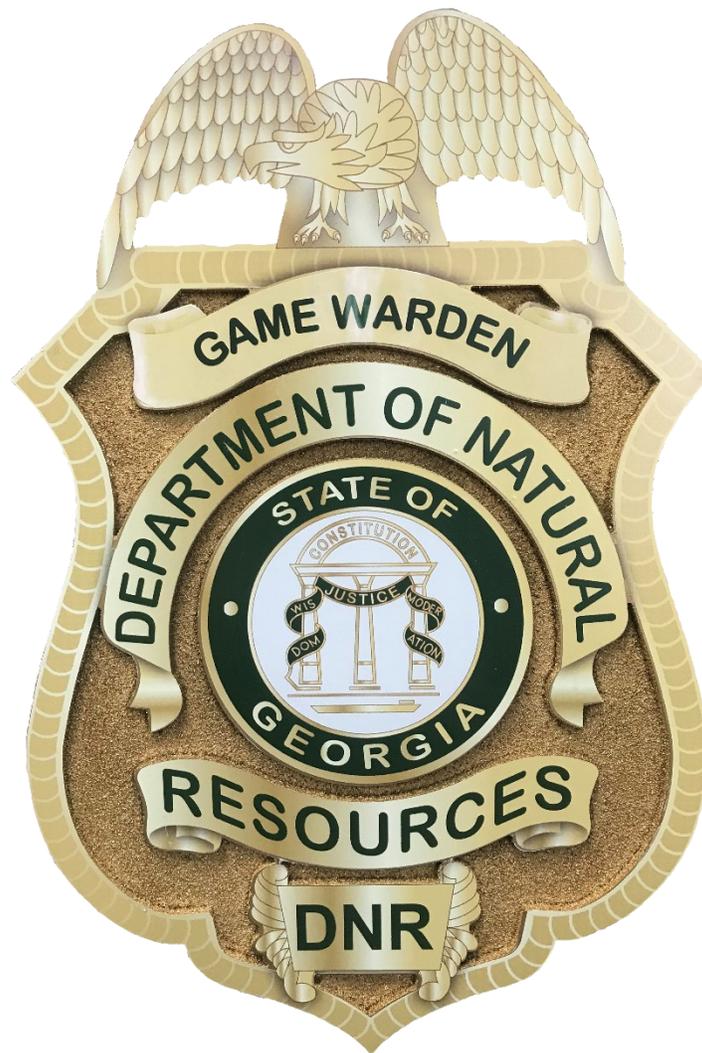
Sewage truck evidence photo taken with Spartan Trail Camera



Confiscated Alligator illegally taken in Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge

Cpl. Carroll worked an investigation for a hunting without permission complaint that resulted in an individual being charged with possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, hunting deer without fluorescent orange and failure to record deer harvest. GW Sibley worked an investigation for over the limit on antlered deer and confiscated 2 racks.

Along with their patrols, Sergeant Atchley, Corporal's Carroll and Robinson continued to serve as instructors during the Game Warden Academy. GW Sibley attended and successfully completed the FTO training and is currently serving as the Field Training Officer for Bo Townsend.



Region VI- Brunswick

In October of 2019, Captain Bob Lynn transferred to the Metter office and Captain Chris Hodge transferred from Macon to the Brunswick office.

Camden/McIntosh/Glynn Work Unit

Sgt. David Brady

In early September 2019, the M/V Golden Ray was departing the Brunswick port when it began to list to one side. Game Wardens responded and were able to assist with removal of the crew as the ship continued to list to its port side. Game Wardens continued to assist over the next few days until all the crew were successfully rescued from the overturned ship.



Game Warden Zach Griffis was nominated as the Region 6 Torch Award Winner. GW Griffis received a complaint of a suspect shooting and killing a Wood Stork on St. Simons Island. Griffis successfully investigated the scene and conducted multiple interviews of the complainant, suspect, and suspects family members. After following all leads, he was able to identify the suspect, get a confession and charge the suspect with Taking/ killing totally protected species.

Game Warden Griffis apprehended a suspect in McIntosh County picking oysters illegally, which resulted in the confiscation of 18 bushels of oysters. This was a significant case due to the health risk of illegally taken oysters being introduced into the seafood market.

Game Warden Corporal David Brady was promoted to the rank of Field Sgt during this period. David replaced veteran Game Warden Sgt Chris Ridley who retired in November of 2019. Sgt. Ridley served the Division for more than 25 years serving in various capacities throughout the state.



Game Warden Colte Shaske was promoted to the rank of Corporal during this period. Shaske worked several investigations throughout the year and is a member of the Division's Special Operations Group (SOG).

Game Warden Jay Bright was promoted to the rank of Corporal during this period. Cpl. Bright worked an extensive investigation with a Special Agent from NOAA and seized more than 80 commercial crab traps offshore in McIntosh and Glynn Counties. These traps were seized for Weak Link violations which are in place to protect the endangered Northern Right Whales.



Game Warden Matt Tsiklistas seized the F/V William Patrick during this period for commercial shrimping in closed waters. This investigation resulted in the seizure of more than 1800 lbs of illegally caught shrimp.

During this period the McIntosh, Glynn, Camden Section worked a total of 91 ATV Patrols on St. Simons and Sea Islands resulting in over 600 hours dedicated to enforcing the Governors Executive Order during the COVID 19 pandemic.

During September 2019, GW Cassidy Gerstorff, Corporal John Evans and Sgt. David Brady responded to a fatal hunting incident in Glynn County. CIRT Investigators responded to the scene and lead the investigation along with the Glynn DA, GBI and Glynn County PD. The suspect was arrested and charged for the incident.

Chatham/Bryan/Liberty Work Unit

Sgt. Cindy Miller

Illegal hunting in Pennsylvania – On 12/5/2019 Game Warden First Class Douglas Chambers spoke to a Pennsylvania Game Warden who requested assistance with an unlawfully taken deer, which was taken and processed in Pennsylvania and later transported to Georgia. GWFC Chambers along with Sergeant Phillip Scott contacted the illegal hunting suspect, confiscated the illegally taken deer for donation, and forwarded the information to the Pennsylvania Game Warden for prosecution.

On 3/1/2020 Game Warden First Class Douglas Chambers, Game Warden Chandler Hamrick, and Corporal Barry Britt were checking for recreational fishing violations offshore at Gray's Reef when a vessel being checked was found to have five red snapper when red snapper season was not open in Federal waters. The case packet was forwarded to NOAA Fisheries Law Enforcement for prosecution which resulted in \$750 in fines.

In April 2020, Game Wardens assisted the Bryan County EMA with responding to tornado damage in the Sunbury area. Game Wardens Barry Britt and Doug Chambers assisted with this storm response.



In May of 2020, Game Wardens Tim Morris, Quintin Reed, and Kiel Toney observed a commercial shrimp trawler fishing near Wassaw Sound. The vessel was charged with using power drawn nets in closed waters. 1605 pounds of shrimp were confiscated.

In May of 2020, during the protests in Savannah, Game Wardens were requested to assist with crowd control during several protests throughout the city. Game Wardens utilized ATV's and patrolled the city for several days to assist local officials.



Long/Wayne/Brantley/Pierce Work Unit

Sgt. Phillip Scott

On September 8th, GW Jack Thain and Sgt. Scott were dispatched to the Jones Creek boat ramp in the Isle of Wight area of Liberty County. Commercial crabbers had called to report someone robbing their crab traps. The Game Wardens found a vessel that had been left at the landing with crabs in the bottom of the vessel and in a cooler in the vessel. The owner of the vessel later returned to retrieve his boat. Game Wardens discovered that the subject had been taking crabs from the commercial crab traps in the area. He was charged with taking crabs from the commercial crab traps, having over the limit of crabs, having undersized crabs, and for fishing without a license.

On November 9th, Game Warden Judd Sears, was contacted by Game Management Technician Ken Martin about an undersized bear that had been killed. Ken stated a subject had turned in a bear that weighed sixty pounds. GW Sears responded to the area and observed the undersized bear



at the check station. GW Sears explained to the hunter that the bear was too small and that it had to be a minimum of seventy-five pounds. He was issued a citation for killing undersize bear.

On August 27, 2019, Game Warden's Jack Thain and Phillip Scott assist NOAA agents with searching baggage with K9 "Case" for illegal wildlife at the Savannah International Airport.



In August of 2019, Cpl. John Evans was contacted and notified of a dumping complaint in Glynn County on Paulk's Pasture Wildlife Management Area. Upon inspection of the area, Cpl. Evans



discovered that someone had dumped a large amount of oil, grease, and some sewage in several locations on the WMA. The substance had killed the vegetation, including some trees, in the areas that it was dumped. Cpl. Evans began his investigation and later placed surveillance cameras in the area. On August 15th, Cpl. Evans received a photo from one of the cameras of a blue tanker truck at the area in which previous dumping had taken place. Cpl. Evans was able to locate the vehicle leaving the WMA and made contact with the driver. Upon completion of his investigation, Cpl. Evans arrested the driver and charged him with 5 felonies for Unlawful Dumping.

On August 22, 2019 Cpl. John Evans and NOAA Agent Ben Hughes were patrolling offshore of sea Island. They found a vessel coming in from offshore and stopped the vessel in Hampton River. After a brief investigation the officers found 29 red snapper that weighed 392 pounds total. Red snapper had been closed since a weekend opening in July of 2019. The case was turned over to NOAA officer Ben Hughes.



Ware/Charlton/Atkinson/Clinch Work Unit

Sgt. Jason Shipes

Sgt. Jason Shipes was promoted to Sgt. over this work unit on June 1, 2020



On September 28th, 2019, GWFC Sam Williams received information about a poaching complaint on Thin Blue Line Hunting Club where one member had reportedly taken over the limit of bears, hunted bears at night, hunted bears over bait, and hunted deer with an illegal weapon. GWFC Williams conducted several interviews, executed several search warrants, and obtained physical evidence on each of the reported activities. As a result, GWFC Williams was able to establish overwhelming probable cause, leading to the conviction of the offender.

Game Warden Luke Rabun and Cpl. Tim Hutto received a tip about a 13-point whitetail deer that was possibly shot and killed from a public road in Atkinson County. After a lengthy investigation Game Rabun and Cpl. Hutto were able to gain confessions from both the passenger and the suspect who shot the buck from his vehicle in Willacoochee. On December 6th, two arrest warrants were executed for hunting from a vehicle and hunting big game from a public road.



Sgt. Jason Shipes and GWFC Sam Williams attending an Eagle Scout dedication event in Fargo, GA. The Scouts constructed and installed the life jacket loaner board and the entrance to the Suwanee River.



Echols/Lowndes/Lanier/Cook/Berrien Work Unit

Sgt. Patrick Dupree

- GWFC Daniel North was promoted to GWFC1 on July 1, 2019.
- GW1 Aaron Powell was promoted to GW2 on July 1, 2019.
- Cpl. Jon Penuel completed PMP School in November 2019.
- Cpl. Jon Penuel received 2020 GW of the Year for Region 6.
- GW2 Aaron Powell received 2020 NWTG GW of the Year for Region 6.

In March 2020, GW2 Aaron Powell initiated an investigation triggered by social media evidence and search warrants into turkey poaching activities of four individuals that resulted in 21 wildlife violations and 4 illegally taken gobblers seized in Echols and Lowndes Counties.



Work Unit officers responded to assist residents and local agencies after tornado damage in Cook County in April 2020.

In April 2020, 6 subjects were apprehended for hunting deer at night on Grand Bay WMA in Lowndes County. Upon completion of the investigation, 26 charges were filed against the individuals for this incident.





GW2 Johnny Robinette conducted a career day presentation at Berrien County Schools in March 2020. Students at the school were given the opportunity to discuss a career as a Game Warden with Game Warden Robinette.

Work Unit officers assisting with the annual NWTf Lowndes Longspurs Jakes event & hunt in Lowndes County in March 2020. Game Wardens assisted the hunters with live fire shooting training along with accompanying the hunters as they hunted wild turkey. Three turkeys were harvested during these hunts.



Offshore Joint Enforcement Agreement with NOAA

The Joint Enforcement Agreement between Georgia DNR and NOAA office of Law Enforcement called for GADNR enforcement personnel to provide a total of 1,748 hours of marine law enforcement or related work under the agreement. Georgia has 5 Execution Priorities: Endangered Species, Red Snapper, Gray’s Reef, Right Whale, and IUU Enforcement.

Vessel patrol hours targeted the following areas: 1) shrimp trawlers checking for TED compliance, 2) intercepts of recreational and commercial fishing vessels returning to Georgia seaports from fishing trips in federal waters, 3) offshore patrols to Special Management Zones and Gray’s Reef National Marine Sanctuary, 4) concentrations of fishing vessels wherever they occur in the Exclusive Economic Zone adjacent to the State of Georgia, 5) intercepts of recreational fishing vessels for Red Snapper compliance, and 6) Inspection of shipping container at the Georgia Ports.

Investigative Unit

The Investigative Unit (IU) is comprised of two full-time investigators, one detached investigator 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. In 2018, 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, 2 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 has 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 equipment and are used throughout the state as needed.

Last year, the Investigative Unit conducted and managed 544 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 16 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 7 boating incidents. These incidents resulted in 5 fatalities. Additionally, CIRT was activated to investigate 3 hunting incidents. These incidents resulted in 2 fatalities.

Marine Theft Unit (MTU)

The primary function of the MTU is to assist law enforcement officers in the field. The MTU conducts computer database and offline searches, 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 97 abandoned vessel/stolen boat requests from the public and field. MTU also fielded numerous phone calls related to the abandoned vessel process. This past year, the MTU was inundated with reports of stolen vessels. The unit has worked and accomplished in recovering 7 of these stolen vessels.

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 over 2,200 permits, collecting approximately \$70,000 in generated fees.

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. The Division also conducted a K-9 Academy which trained 3 new Game Warden K-9s. The K-9s replaced three dogs that recently retired after 10 years of service. Two German Shepherds and a Belgian Malinois were trained by the Division Kennel Master as well as one new K-9 handler. Two of the dogs went to existing members of the K-9 unit. The dogs and their handlers attended twelve consecutive weeks (480 hours) of training at various locations throughout the state and are now certified in Man-tracking, Apprehension, Article Recovery and Wildlife Detection and are currently working in the field.



The new K-9s, Cuff, Judge, and Bo.

FY2020 K-9/Handler Teams

Cpl. Brooks Varnell and K-9 Taz

Cpl. Tim Hutto and K-9 Titan

GWFC Eric Isom and K-9 Bo

Cpl. Greg Wade and K-9 Cuff

GWFC Keith Page and K-9 Rio

GWFC Jack Thain and K-9 Case

GW Nolan Callaway and K-9 Judge

Training Unit

Game Warden Academy

The 34th Game Warden Academy began on Sunday, January 5th at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth. Ten cadets from across the state began training. One cadet voluntarily withdrew after week one, but the nine-remaining continued on and successfully completed Firearms, Emergency Vehicle Operations, Tactical ATV, Georgia and Federal Law, Criminal Procedure and a variety of other Basic Law Enforcement Training courses before the COVID-19 pandemic hit Georgia.



As the state began to battle the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March, P.O.S.T. suspended all Basic Law Enforcement Training programs throughout the state. Our academy suspended operations on March 16th and the cadets of the 34th Game Warden Academy were sent to their respective Regions to begin a modified field training program and to assist with DNR's statewide response to COVID-19. Cadets assisted the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) with the logistical support and helped ship and deliver PPE and other vital supplies throughout the state.

Academy training operations resumed on Sunday, May 3rd and the cadets went back to work on completing the remaining 13 weeks of scheduled training. Cadets trained for twenty (20) straight days without a day off in order to limit their exposure to outside personnel and to help make up for lost training time. New protocols for social distancing and other COVID-19 safety precautions for academy training were put in place to ensure the safety of our cadets and instructors. The cadets completed the academy and graduated on July 24th. The Basic Game Warden Academy consists of 23 weeks (935 hours) of classroom and performance-based training.



Training Staff (L-R) – Joe Talaber, Debra Hollar, Captain Bob Holley

In-Service Training

This years in service training schedule was dominated by the challenges posed by COVID-19. However, we have been able to complete annual firearm’s re-qualifications, Use of Deadly Force and De-escalation Training, X2 Taser re-certification training and our annual Standardized Field Sobriety and BUI Refresher training. Game Warden’s also completed the mandated Governor’s Initiative Community Oriented Policing training online this quarter. This year’s training consisted of the “Start the Conversation” suicide awareness and prevention training and the “Building Positive Community Relations” training. The division will be completing our annual fall firearm’s in-service in October as well as CPR/First Aid recertification.



Aviation Unit

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

The Aviation Unit flew 821 hours in support of the Division's Game Wardens as they conducted their core mission of protecting the states waterways and woodland areas. This consisted of flying support throughout the hunting season from early fall through early spring. Game Wardens were flown on county surveys looking for baited food plots, duck ponds and illegal shrimping along the Georgia coast. Flight support was also provided for Operation Dry Water, night deer poaching/spotlighting patrols, and searches for missing person and drowning victims across the state. The Wildlife Resource Division (WRD) was provided aviation support during surveys of Bald Eagles, Kestrel, Sandhill Cranes, and waterfowl. Lt Jaye Bridwell flew these same flights along the Georgia coast in addition to surveys for sea turtles, dolphins, and the tagging of manatee. In addition to the WRD surveys, the Aviation Unit flew multiple missions assisting Game Management Section with prescribed burns on the State WMA's during the late winter months of January through March 2020.



Additionally, the Aviation Unit was actively involved with the Law Enforcement Division's response to COVID-19. The unit was tasked with multiple, high priority Georgia Emergency Management Agency and Homeland Security (GEMA) flight requests to transport Personal Protective Equipment, ventilators and life-saving medications to multiple medical centers and hospitals across the State. Also, the Aviation Unit conducted multiple weekend patrol flights during April and May, assisting the Game Warden's enforcement of Governor Brian Kemp's Executive Order on social distancing on State Parks, beaches, and large bodies of water.



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. The Aviation Unit also assisted other State and Federal law enforcement agencies utilizing the Kodiak fixed-wing airplane, most notably the US Department of Agriculture's Operation Sunrise, a four-month investigation into illegal cockfighting in SE Georgia.

The Aviation Unit was very fortunate taking delivery of a new 2019 Bell 407GX in December 2019 and trading our two older used aircraft for a used 2012 Bell 407GX. This all Bell 407GX helicopter fleet will increase our flight operation capabilities and increase safety while decreasing training and maintenance costs for the Division.



Honor Guard



Honor Guard Members

- Sgt. Derek Dillard (Commander)
- Capt. Bob Holley (Training unit)
- Sgt. Brooks Varnell
- Sgt. Travis Sweat
- Sgt. Jeremy Bolen
- Sgt. David Brady
- Cpl. Cody Jones
- Cpl. Ben Payne
- Cpl. Dan Schay
- Cpl. Scott Carroll
- Cpl. Chase Altman
- Cpl. Kiel Toney
- GWFC Clint Jarriel
- GW Jeffery Turner

Honor Guard Details

- August 18, 2019 – Presentation of Colors by Game Wardens Sgt. Brooks Varnell, Cpl. Scott Carroll, Cpl. Chase Altman and GWFC Clint Jarriel at the annual DNR LED Awards Banquet in Savannah, Georgia.
- August 19, 2019 – Presentation of Colors by Game Wardens Sgt. Brooks Varnell, Cpl. Scott Carroll, Cpl. Chase Altman and GWFC Clint Jarriel at the POAG Conference in Savannah, Georgia.
- August 21, 2019 – Funeral detail for retired Game Warden Col. Walt Taylor in Manchester and Woodbury, Georgia. Sgt. Derek Dillard, Sgt. Travis Sweat, Sgt. Brooks Varnell, Cpl. David Brady, Cpl. Scott Carroll and GWFC Clint Jarriel were the honorary pallbearers and folded and presented the flag to his family.
- November 7, 2019 – Funeral detail for retired Game Warden Sgt. Danny Crook in Buchanan, Georgia. Sgt. Brooks Varnell and Cpl. Cody Jones presented a folded State flag to his family.
- January 26 & 27, 2020 – Visitation and funeral details for retired Game Warden Maj. Bill Cline in Waleska, Georgia. Sgt. Derek Dillard, Sgt. Brooks Varnell, Sgt. Travis Sweat, Cpl. Cody Jones and GWFC Dan Shay were honorary pallbearers and folded and presented the State flag to his family.
- April 22, 2020 – Funeral detail for Game Warden Capt. Chris Hodge's daughter, Rachel in Kingsland and Graham, Georgia. Sgt. David Brady and GWFC Clint Jarriel represented the department's honor guard at the funeral.



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:

Captain Mike Burgamy
Captain Doyte Chaffin
RFC2 Zack Hardy
RFC2 Russell Epps
Sgt. Brooks Varnell
Sgt. Shaymus McNeely
Sgt. Brian Adams
Sgt. Kevin Joyce
GWFC1 Lamar Burns
GWFC1 Ken Lalumiere
Sgt. Mark Patterson
Cpl. Daniel Gray
Cpl. Bobby Timmerman
Cpl. Rodney Horne
Cpl. Patrick Gibbs
Cpl. Jordan Crawford
Sgt. David Brady
Cpl. Zack Hardy
GW 2 Jason Warren
GW 2 Andrew Crider
GW 2 Kyle Faulknor
GW 2 Jared Wood
GW 2 Savannah Miller
GW 2 Levi Thompson
GW 2 Erin McDade
GW 2 Saxon Campbell
GW 2 Evan Nobles
GW 2 Austin Biggers
GW 2 Stetson Stevens
GW 2 Blake Chafin
GW 2 Greg Castelli
GW 2 Drew Beverly
GW 2 Quintin Reed
GW 2 Luke Rabun
GW 2 Aaron Powell
GWFC 1 Charlie Follin
GWFC 1 Travis Shrader
GWFC 1 Frank Pucci
GWFC 1 Kalem Burns
GWFC 1 Ryan Locke
GWFC 1 Ethan Franklin
GWFC 1 Jonathan Segars
GWFC 1 Nolan Callaway
GWFC 1 Joseph Cowart
GWFC 1 Josh Cockrell
GWFC 1 Chris Thompson
GWFC 1 David Jones
GWFC 2 Kevin Goss
GWFC 2 David Fisher
GWFC 2 Jeremy Reese
Cpl. Jay Bright
Cpl. David Fisher
Sgt. Jason Shipps

Retirements:

Captain Scott L. Klingel
GW2 Tommy R. Crabb
Sgt. Max Boswell
Sgt. Tony Fox
Sgt. Damon Winters
GWFC2 Allen Mills
Cpl. Bill Bryson
Sgt. Chris Ridley
GWFC2 Chad Chambers
Sgt. Brent Railey
Sgt. Randy Aspinwall

Activity Summary	FY2020
Hunter Ed Programs	121
I&E Programs	868
Boating Safety Programs	136
Hunter Development	2
Total Programs	1,127
Water SAR Cases	169
Water SAR Hours	2,641
Vessels Assisted	166
Water Persons Asst.	512
Land SAR Cases	168
Land SAR Hours	1,543
Land Persons Asst.	277
Hunting Incidents	27
Boating Incidents	128
Drownings	53
Hunting License Checks	25,441
Fishing License Checks	29,779
Comm. License Checks	317
Total License Checks	55,537
Boat Checks	26,461
Boating Contacts	5,703
Hunting Contacts	3,596
Fishing Contacts	3,739
Trapping Contacts	44
Environmental Contacts	700
Other Contacts	5,079
Total Contacts	18,861



GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION



JAMES HIRAM WALLER
JAMES EDWARD MORTON
ASA EDWIN THORNTON
CHARLES C. MERCER
ROCKY D. WAINWRIGHT

ROBERT CLAYTON SIZEMORE
LONNIE F. BOGGUS
WILLIAM EARL HOBBS
WILLIAM LEE BRYANT
STANLEY CURTIS ELROD



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



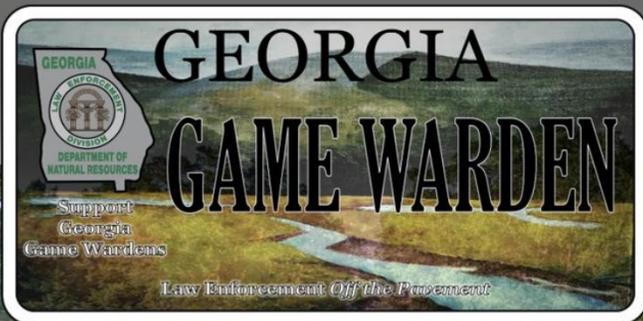
*“Support Georgia Game Wardens
with the purchase of a specialty
license plate for your vehicle. I did.”*



**Michael Waddell
Bone Collector
The Outdoor Channel**



Visit www.gadnrle.org for more information



**Get your Georgia DNR
Law Enforcement license
plate today!**



Support those who protect our natural resources!