



# GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Commissioner  
Mark Williams

Director  
Colonel Thomas  
Barnard



**Law Enforcement Division  
FY 2021 Annual Report**

# Headquarters



**Colonel Thomas Barnard, Director**



**Lt. Colonel Mike England,  
Assistant Director**



**Major Stephen Adams**



**Major Bob Holley**

# 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**



**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 199 POST-certified Game Wardens with statewide authority and full arrest powers and 24 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 142 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-three new 4x4 patrol vehicles were purchased for field personnel. New equipment included the ballistic bump helmets for the Special Operations Group, gas masks and new body armor for select personnel, three UTVs and nine patrol boats.

## **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, 363 tips were received for various violations.

## **OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES**

### **Crime Suppression**

This past fiscal year has seen a huge increase in illegal street racing and crime in the City of Atlanta. Governor Brian Kemp initiated a collaborative effort between the Department of Natural Resources, Georgia State Patrol, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Atlanta Police Department, Fulton County Sheriff's Office, and the City of South Fulton, to assist in the city on weekends with the objective of cracking down on criminal activity and illegal street racing in and around Atlanta. From April 9<sup>th</sup> through June 13<sup>th</sup>, the operation resulted in 4,246 vehicle stops, 142 pursuits, 127 DUIs, 62 wanted persons, 95 reckless driving, 15 stolen guns, 2,915 citations/arrests, 250 impounded vehicles, 3,054 warnings, and five drug arrests. Game Wardens from across the state continue to be deployed on Saturdays and Sundays into FY 2022.

### **COVID-19**

As the year progressed, the COVID-19 Pandemic continued, but with the distribution of vaccine, law enforcement offices statewide began to return to normal operation. The Division is still committed to supporting the Georgia Department of Public Health and other agencies as long as necessary in the fight against COVID-19.

### **JEA Patrols**

The Joint Agreement #19 between Georgia DNR and NOAA Office of Law Enforcement called for GADNR enforcement personnel to provide a total of 1,604 hours of marine law enforcement or related work under the agreement. Georgia has 5 Execution Priorities. They are Endangered Species, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, National Marine Sanctuaries Act, Marine Mammal Right Whale, and Lacey Act/International (IUU).

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. These patrols resulted in 6 state charges and 12 Federal Cases sent to NOAA OLE.

## **Public Affairs**

### Media Relations and Public Outreach

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued, media news conferences and ride-alongs with Game Wardens were limited. News releases, radio and TV interviews, and social media posts were the primary information channels for the start of the boating and hunting seasons, “Operation Dry Water,” and the July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday weekend to promote safe boating and swimming safety and to educate citizens on boating laws and how they are applied. 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 Division’s hunting, fishing, and boating enforcement efforts, and awards and recognitions received by game wardens.

### Social Media

LED manages a Facebook page that is over 76,000 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 an Instagram account with over 7,500 followers, a Twitter account that currently has over 1,700 followers, and a YouTube Channel with multiple safety-related videos that has over 600 subscribers.



**Previous Game Wardens of the Year**

William Powell	1980	David Ruddell	2001
W.D. Hill, Jr.	1981	Derek Dillard	2002
Michael Bone	1982	Mike Barr	2003
William Vickers	1983	Harry E. Akins	2004
Dan Parrish	1984	Eric Brown	2005
Ronald Bailey	1985	John Murphy	2006
Ralph Sheppard	1986	Shane Sartor	2007
Roger D. Garrison	1987	Mike Binion	2008
James McDaniel	1988	Brian Hobbins	2009
Doug Lewis	1989	Cindy Miller	2010
Terry West	1990	Timothy Butler	2011
W. Howard Hensley, Jr.	1991	Jason Roberson	2012
Dennis Aderholt	1992	David Webb	2013
Bill Bunch	1993	Greg Wade	2014
Arvid Edwards	1994	Casey Jones	2015
Mitchell H. Yeargin	1995	Eddie Tompkins	2016
Jeff Weaver	1996	Brian Adams	2017
Mike Commander	1997	Cody Jones	2018
Phillip Scott	1998	Quinn Fogle	2019
Stanley Elrod	1999	Ryan Locke	2020
Rick Sellars	2000		



## **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.

### **Region Office Personnel Changes**

Captain Derek Dillard was promoted to Acworth, Region 1 supervisor after the transfer of Captain Burgamy. The Administrative Assistant is Joyce Holland and Sherry Rollins fills the Administration Support position. Sergeant Brian Keener retired as the Administrative Sergeant.

The “Mountain Work Section” of Region I is comprised of Catoosa, Gilmer, Gordon, Murray, Pickens, and Whitfield Counties. Section assignments are as follows: Cpl. Casey Jones – Murray, GW Mark Moyer – Whitfield, GW Kalem Burns – Gilmer, GW Travis Shrader – Catoosa, GW Will Smith – Pickens, GW Ryan Thomas – Fort Mt. State Park, and supervisory Sgt. James Keener. The section covers a vast area of both state-owned or controlled properties as well as large expanses of National Forest Lands. Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in the section include Blue Ridge, Rich Mt., Cartecay Tract, Cohutta, Coosawattee, Carter’s Lake Tract, Conasauga River, John’s Mt., and McEntire VPA. Wardens also patrol the section’s main body of water, Carter’s Lake, as well as many other smaller impoundments, rivers, and creeks. State Parks and Historic Sites in the section include Fort Mt., Chief Vann House, New Echota, and Resaca Battlefield.



Cpl. Casey Jones, GW Ryan Thomas, and GW Travis Shrader after closing an investigation that resulted in multiple violations in Whitfield County. Violations included two counts of hunting from a public road, four counts of hunting from a motor vehicle, four counts of hunting out of season, four counts of hunting without permission, two counts of hunting deer at night, one count of unlawful enticement of game and one count of hunting big game over bait (turkey).



*Left and center: Bears were killed over bait in Gilmer County in September of 2020 and confiscated by GW Kalem Burns. The undersized bear on the right was taken from Cohutta WMA and was confiscated by GW Travis Schrader.*

The Allatoona section consists of Sgt. Brooks Varnell, Cpl. Byron Young, Cpl. Bart Hendrix, Game Warden Frank Pucci, Game Warden Tyler Lewis, Game Warden Philip Stout, Game Warden Steven Martinez, and Game Warden David Wright. The Allatoona section welcomed its newest Game Warden David Wright into the section after graduating from the academy. Through several weeklong investigations Game Warden Tyler Lewis was able to prove the illegal taking of a massive buck which led to several charges as well as the confiscation of the antlers. Cpl. Byron Young, through quick response and excellent Game Warden skills, was able to locate a suspect and the large deer killed illegally on federal property in Bartow County. Game Warden Frank Pucci was named the Boating Safety Officer of the Year for the State of Georgia. Game Warden Tyler Lewis was named the Torch Award winner for not only the State of Georgia but for the entire Southeastern United States. The entire section worked tirelessly in Boating Under the Influence enforcement which led to more BUI cases made this season than in over three decades. After the hunting season Cpl. Byron Young was able to transfer sections and is now assigned to Floyd County where he will now patrol the northwest section of the state.



Sgt. Ben Cunningham was promoted to supervise Floyd, Polk, Chattooga, Walker, and Dade Counties on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, and on April 1, 2021, Cpl. Byron Young transferred to Floyd County from Bartow County. The other officers in the section are Corporal Chad Cox and Game Wardens Roger McConkey, Carla Gann, Jason Warren, Andrew Crider, and Kyle Faulknor.



*The Georgia Chapter of Safari Club International (SCI) was proud to host wounded veterans for a deer hunt on Saturday, December 12, 2020, in Cedartown, GA. For most of the veterans, this was their first deer hunt. After a warm welcome introduction and a safety talk from Sgt. Ben Cunningham and Cpl. Chad Cox, veterans were treated to lunch and then headed for the shooting range where they familiarized themselves with the rifle they would be hunting with that afternoon.*

The West Point Section includes Meriwether, Troup, Heard, Pike, Fayette, Spalding, Henry, and Clayton Counties and is supervised by Sergeant Mitch Oliver. The Game Wardens in this work unit patrol West Point Lake along with sections of the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers. Several state-owned properties are also located within the work section including 3 Wildlife Management Areas, and 2 State Parks. Game Wardens assigned to this work unit are, Game Warden Charles Follin, Game Warden Austin Biggers, Game Warden Hunter Bowman, Game Warden First Class Russell Epps, Cpl. Keith Page, and Corporal Keith Waddell.



*Game Warden Austin Biggers was assigned to Pike County on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Before this assignment, Game Warden Biggers was previously assigned to Telfair County since Jan 2019. In June 2021, Game Warden Biggers was nominated for the Region IV Torch Award.*



Game Warden Hunter Bowman completed the Game Warden Academy in July 2020 and is currently assigned to Troup County. In 2021, Game Warden Bowman was nominated for the Region 1 Torch Award. He was able to apprehend a suspect in Clayton County for hunting geese out of season with a pellet rifle. His other notable cases included a lengthy investigation involving a commercial trash collection truck dumping an egregious amount of waste on private property. Game Warden Bowman was able to identify and arrest two individuals for misdemeanor high and aggravated dumping charges.



Game Warden First Class Russell Epps is assigned to Heard County, he is a member of the Critical Incident Reconstruction Team and is a certified POST Instructor. Game Warden Epps assisted with the instruction of 35<sup>th</sup> Game Warden Academy Class where he taught Emergency Vehicle Operations, Use of Force, Wildlife, and officer Water Survival. Pictured right is one of the vessel incidents Epps assisted working on West Point Lake.



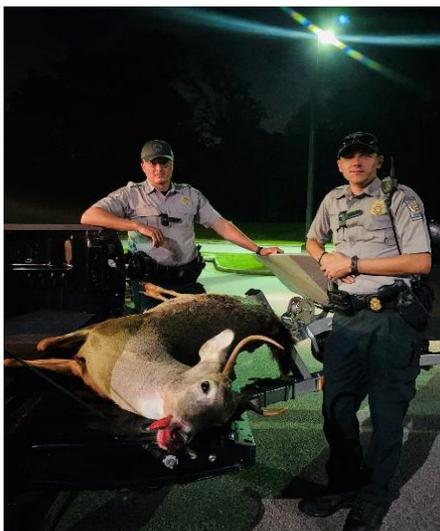
Corporal Keith Page is currently assigned to Spalding County. Corporal Page is an active K9 officer with the department with officer Rio as his K9 and routinely travels outside the work section to assist. In March 2021 K9 Rio was utilized to apprehend multiple turkey hunters found to be hunting over bait. After tracking the hunters back to the location of the hunt, K9 Rio was also deployed to locate evidence at the scene. Rio successfully located, 2 spent shotshells, feathers, and blood at two different kill sites along with the wads from the shells confirming the shot directions. After being confronted with the evidence located by Rio, both hunters confessed to baiting the area prior to hunting and killing two turkeys over the bait. The parts of the turkeys pictured were seized to be used as K9 training items in the future.



Corporal Keith Waddell is assigned to Meriwether County, he is a member of the DNR Special Operations Group, and is a camera operator for DNR Aviation. Cpl. Waddell apprehended numerous violators for hunting migratory game birds over bait, after hours, and possession over the limit of game fish.

The Southwest Section of Region I is supervised by Sergeant Eric Brown. The area includes Haralson, Paulding, Carroll, Douglas, Fulton, and Coweta Counties. The officers in the section are Corporals Daniel Gray and Zack Hardy and Game Wardens Garrett Pownall, Ryan Shorter, and Brock Hoyt. Corporal Daniel Gray was the recipient of the 2021 National Wild Turkey Officer of the Year for State.

On July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Cpl. Zack Hardy and Cpl. Daniel Gray responded to the Johns Creek area of Fulton County. The Estates at Johns Creek apartment complex had what appeared to be a poisoning case involving 25 geese that live/visit the two ponds on the site. Cpl. Hardy began gathering evidence and Cpl. Gray and the Urban Game Management group began collecting the deceased geese for transport to UGA for testing purposes. There were three baited sites (whole corn) that were also found and collected for evidence and testing. In conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division after multiple interviews with the suspect, the suspect and company were charged with multiple violations.



On October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, GWFC Ryan Shorter and GWFC Brock Hoyt investigated a hunter that was illegally hunting on Sweetwater Creek State Park and was accessing the park by vessel from the Chattahoochee River. Game Wardens located the individual and took him into custody. The subject was charged for hunting on a closed state park, hunting without orange, recording a harvested deer in the wrong county, operating a vessel without lights in hours of darkness, operating a vessel with insufficient PFDs, and operating a motor vehicle as an unlicensed driver.



November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, GWFC Ryan Shorter received information about a giant buck that had been killed in Coweta County. Game Warden Shorter and Cpl. Daniel Gray investigated the buck that was harvested and was able to discover that the deer had been illegally taken by a non-resident from Florida. Game Warden Shorter worked with Florida FWC officers to locate and contact the subject. The subject was charged for hunting without a non-resident license and hunting without a non-resident big game license, and the buck was confiscated. The landowner, where the deer was killed, was cited for tagging the buck on his harvest record.



On January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, GW Hoyt completed a case against a repeat poacher who had previously been caught by Game Wardens. He was charged with 4 counts of hunting without permission, 4 counts of hunting without a license, 4 counts of hunting big game over bait (without landowner permission), and 2 counts of operating an unregistered vehicle on a public road. Hoyt worked with local police agencies to perform a search warrant on the subject's residence. The search warrant yielded 2 counts of a convicted felon in possession of firearms and 1 charge for possession of a schedule 1 narcotic.

With the assistance of Sgt Eric Brown, Cpl. Daniel Gray, GW Ryan Shorter, and GW Garrett Pownall, Hoyt was able to catch the subject coming out of the woods. He was booked in Fulton County Jail on the 5<sup>th</sup> charge of hunting without permission and multiple outstanding warrants.

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, Game Warden Brock Hoyt and Corporal Zack Hardy closed a long-standing trapping case. The investigation yielded violations on 5 subjects that were delinquent in their commercial trapping status for 10 years. There were 22 contacts filed to include operating without commercial trapping licenses', operating without nuisance control permits', multiple counts of not tagging traps, not checking traps every 24 hours, and several other nuisance permit violations.



On March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, Cpl. Daniel Gray and Sgt Eric Brown located a truck while patrolling for turkey hunting activity in Haralson County. The truck had a dead gobbler in the back of it. Cpl. Gray recognized the vehicle as a vehicle Cpl. Zack Hardy was trying to locate on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021, for killing a turkey over bait in Paulding County. Cpl. Gray and Sgt. Brown located the two hunters hunting turkey over bait on this property in Haralson and both hunters were charged for hunting turkeys over bait. Cpl. Hardy then came to our location and was able to interview the subject to who the truck belonged to and charged him for killing the dead turkey in the back in his truck the day before over bait in Paulding County.

## Region II- Gainesville



*L-R front row: Secretary Tasha Lamb, Capt. Derek Dillard, GW2 Taylor Gilmore, GWFC1 Savannah Miller, GWFC1 Ethan Franklin, GWFC2 Matt Johnson, Cpl. Craig Fulghum, AOC Brenda Tanner. L-R Back row: GWFC2 Jason Harrison, Cpl. Kevin Godbee, Cpl. Tim Butler, Cpl. Joe Hill, GWFC2 Mark Stephens, Cpl. Shane Brown, Sgt. Casey Jones, Sgt. Mark Patterson, GWFC1 Jeffery Turner, Cpl. Cody Jones, GWFC1 Bryan Price, Sgt. Tim Vickery and GWFC2 Brandon Pierce*  
*Not pictured: Sgt. Adam Loudermilk, Sgt. Jason Roberson, Cpl. Beth Gilbert, Cpl. Dan Schay, Cpl. Anne Wiley, GWFC Kevin Goss, GWFC Ryan Locke, GWFC Phillip Nelson, GWFC Ryan Cleveland, GWFC Noah Osborne, GW Jared Wood and GW Adam Kimbrough.*

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 WMAs 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.

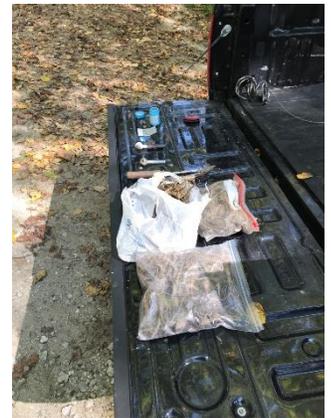


Region II Game Wardens continued their support of the Outdoor Dream Foundation for the 17<sup>th</sup> consecutive year March 7<sup>th</sup> at Skeeter Branch Hunting Preserve. This annual duck hunt was done in the honor of Captain Stan Elrod and was a huge success. The hunt takes place every year with the gracious donation of time and facilities by the owners of Skeeter Branch Preserve and is coordinated by Cpl. Craig Fulghum. During this event, each terminally ill youth hunter is

paired with a Game Warden to serve as their guide and ensure the safety of all participants. Participating Game Wardens included Cpl. Tim Butler, Cpl. Craig Fulghum, RFC Mark Stephens, RFC Brandon Pierce, RFC Ryan Cleveland, RFC Noah Osborne, RFC Phillip Nelson, Major Stephen Adams and Sgt. Mark Patterson.

### **Rabun County**

In October, GW Jared Wood worked a case involving the illegal harvest of ginseng on National Forest Service property. While patrolling for that violation, he contacted two subjects emerging from the woods in a complaint area. After a short interview with the subjects, they admitted to harvesting ginseng. One of the subjects had a warrant, which prompted a search of the subject's backpack. The search produced a small amount of marijuana and two small bags of methamphetamines. Game Warden Wood followed up with a search warrant on both subject's phones, which resulted in 9 additional charges including digging ginseng out of season, without permission, and failure to report harvest.



In January, GW Wood received information from a complainant that had found a deer stand on their property. After checking the area, he found bait and a camera that had been placed just over the boundary line on National Forest Service property. Game Warden Wood seized the trail camera and, after obtaining a warrant, found the owner of the camera. It contained several pictures of the camera owner putting out bait. The subject was interviewed and admitted to putting bait out on National Forest Service property. Game Warden Wood then obtained a warrant for the subject's phone, where he found several more pictures of poaching activity including night deer

hunting and illegal alligator hunting in Calhoun County, Georgia and illegal bear baiting, illegal turkey and deer hunting in Rabun County. A months long investigation resulted in 25 arrest warrants being issued in Rabun County and 10 warrants in Calhoun County including taking alligator out of season charges. Game Warden Wood arrested the subject in May on the warrants. The Rabun County charges included baiting bear, hunting out of season, hunting without permission, placing bait on national forest, hunting after obtaining limit, hunting without wearing fluorescent orange, and recording and reporting requirements for game animals and game birds.

### Franklin County

In December 2020, Cpls. Tim Vickery & Craig Fulghum began an extensive deer poaching investigation with Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, which included cell phone data, interviews, physical evidence & search warrants in Tennessee & Franklin County, GA. During the investigation, the subjects were arrested again by Cpl. Vickery for illegal hunting activities. Meth was found in Dr. Pepper cans in the vehicle, along with five loaded firearms. The Game Wardens filed 126 total charges & 69 sets of antlers were seized.



In a separate, but related, case, Cpl. Vickery charged one of the same subjects with 37 misdemeanors and one felony in a case that, at the end of FY 2021, was still awaiting adjudication.

### Rabun County

In June, Game Wardens worked a boating fatality on Tugalo Lake in Rabun County. The operator of a bass boat was pulling two subjects on a tube when one of the tubers came off. The tuber was



not wearing a life jacket. The operator of the boat turned around to go pick him up and ended up running over the subject in the water. Witnesses saw the subject go down after being struck. The operator was arrested and charged with homicide by vessel, boating under the influence under 21 years of age, towing skier without wearing PFD, operating vessel with greater than 25 hp on Tugalo Lake, operating vessel with insufficient PFDs, and operating vessel with expired registration. The victim was located by the Ga DNR Sonar Team. CIRT worked the incident.

### Towns County

In the Fall of 2020, Game Warden Jeffery Turner charged a suspect for hunting big game over bait in the Towns County area. Additionally, Turner had the opportunity to confiscate a 460-pound black bear within this same case. Pictured is the skull of that bear which is now used in wildlife education programs. In addition, Game Warden Turner worked a total of three search and rescue missions. These incidents yielded the following: charged a suspect for boating under the influence on Lake Chatuge and located evidence (ammunition, Two AR-15's and a laptop) that led to the prosecution of a child molestation case in White County.



## **Fannin County**

In the fall of 2020 Corporal Jones arrested three suspects for hunting from a public road, hunting from a motor vehicle, violation of GA controlled substance act, possession of a gun while committing a felony and an under sized bear. Corporal Jones also made several turkey hunting cases which include hunting over bait, hunting without permission and hunting without license, hunting without a big game license, taking over the season limit of turkeys and possession of big game without a big game license.



In one investigation that started in April 2020 Corporal Jones located turkey bait and put up a Spartan Camera resulting in the apprehension of three suspects hunting over bait. Corporal Jones then started looking into the suspects public social media accounts and discovered several more violations which included several different suspects. In all Corporal Jones documented 38 deer and turkey hunting violations. Several turkey parts and one buck rack were confiscated. Corporal Jones also had one BUI on Lake Blue Ridge and was part of Captain Stan Elrod's Honor Guard procession.

## **Dawson County**

Game Warden Savannah Miller made nine BUI's, worked five boating incidents and one drowning on Lake Lanier. Game Warden Miller transferred to Dawson County in the spring of 2021.

### **Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area**

Game Warden Bryan Price worked five SAR mission on land and two on water. He was also dispatched to five riot details in Atlanta and assisted three weekends with the Atlanta Crime Suppression detail.

## **Union County**



Game Warden First Class Matt Johnson is pictured with a buck that he and Game Warden First Class Shane Brown confiscated. The two Game Wardens responded to a complaint regarding a deer being shot from the road. The suspect was charged for the violations and the buck was donated to the Hunters for the Hungary program.

## **Lumpkin County**

Corporal Shane Brown charged a Lumpkin County man for killing a turkey illegally after the suspect admitted to intentionally running over the turkey with his car. Corporal Brown was also involved with several search and rescue mission this past year and was promoted to Corporal in the Spring of 2020.

## **Lake Lanier**

The Lake Lanier work section is comprised of Hall, Forsyth, Jackson, and Banks counties and all of Lake Sidney Lanier. The work section has been full of turnover during the past year. Corporal Adam Loudermilk promoted to Administrative Sergeant, Game Warden Chandler Hamrick left the department, Game Warden Savannah Miller Transferred out of the section, Game Warden Adam Kimbrough was hired and completed the DNR Academy, and Game Wardens Beth Gilbert and Dan Schay promoted to Corporal and transferred into the section.

The section has continued to be very busy and has worked 5 drownings, 25 boating incidents, three of which were fatalities, and produced sixty-four arrests for boating under the influence during this period.

## **Hall County**

In late November of 2020, Game Warden Ryan Locke received information that a suspect had shot a deer at night and from a vehicle. Locke began to investigate the incident and determined that the suspect was a convicted felon. The location of the incident was near a school in Hall County. Game Warden Locke was able to retrieve video from the school surveillance system that showed the suspect vehicle enter the property and shoot the deer. Game Wardens from the work section executed a search warrant on the suspect's home. A muzzle loading rifle, ammunition, drugs, as

well as evidence corroborating illegal hunting were located. Game Warden Locke seized the suspects cell phone, and a search warrant was executed on it. Additional evidence of illegal hunting was located on the phone and Locke was able to use metadata from the cell phone to not only put the suspect at the scene of the crime but was able to corroborate the eyewitness's story. Arrest warrants were secured for hunting deer at night, hunting from a vehicle, hunting from a public road, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, hunting without permission, failure to record deer harvest, and taking over the limit.

Sgt. Lee Brown's work unit worked a drowning on Fort Yargo State Park and was also commended by the Park's staff for their presence and visibility on the park.

### **Region Awards this year**

GWFC Jason Harrison was the Region II Game Warden of the Year and Waterfowl Officer of the Year.

GWFC Cody Jones was the Region II NWTF Officer of the Year.

Cpl. Eddie Tompkins was the Region II Investigative Game Warden of the Year.

GWFC Ryan Locke was the Region II Boating Officer of the Year.

GW Jared Wood was the Region II Torch Award recipient.

### **Region Promotions this year**

Adam Loudermilk promoted to Administrative Sergeant at the Gainesville Office

Tim Vickery promoted to Field Sergeant in Franklin County

Casey Jones promoted to Field Sergeant in Fannin County

Joe Hill promoted to Corporal in Habersham County

Shane Brown promoted to Corporal in Lumpkin County

Beth Gilbert and Dan Schay promoted to Corporal on Lake Lanier

Game Wardens Taylor Gilmore and Adam Kimbrough completed FTO Training.

## Region III- Thomson



*Captain Doyte Chaffin, Elizabeth Bentley, Rainee Rowell, Sgt. John Harwell*

The Region III Law Enforcement Division is comprised of 28 counties from East Central Georgia to the Piedmont. Within the region, there are 23 Wildlife Management Areas, three VPSs (voluntary public access), nine State Parks, and three Public Fishing Areas. Region III is home to Clarks Hill Lake, Lake Sinclair, Lake Juliette, Lake Tobesofkee, Lake Jackson and Lake Oconee. River systems include the Savannah, Little, Broad, Ogeechee, Oconee, Apalachee, and the Ohoopie. 29 POST certified Game Wardens, one Administrative Assistant, and a secretary are assigned to the region.

### **Promotions & Personnel Changes**

Region III welcomed GW Skyler Redmond to fill the Burke County position. Cpl. Tony Wynne retired with 25 years. Sgt. Bo Kelly retired with 25 years. GW Levi Thompson transferred from Jasper Co. to

Columbia Co. GW Taylor Bingham transferred from Burke Co. to Elijah Clark SP/Lincoln Co. GW Shane Sartor transferred from Region 2 to Wilkes Co. and then promoted to Corporal. Cpl. Bubba Stanford promoted to Sgt. GW Josh Cockrell, GW Nolan Callaway, and GW John Rhodes resigned. GW Jon Segars was promoted to Cpl. and then transferred from Region 2 to Putnam Co. GW Erin McDade transferred from Baldwin Co. to Jones Co. GW Lamar Burns promoted to GWFC2.

### **Personnel Awards**

Sgt. Brian Carter was nominated for Supervisor of the Year by his section.

GW Jason Bennett was the Region III Torch Award recipient and completed Instructor Training.

Cpl. Jon Segars completed CIRT investigator training and is now a member of CIRT. He was also accepted to PMP School.

Cpl. David Fisher has completed 5 of the required 10 modules of PMP.

GWFC Nolan Callaway received the Region Boating Safety Officer of the Year.

GWFC John Rhodes was named the State Game Warden of the Year.

## **In the Community**

GWs helped with deer/turkey hunts for disabled soldiers. Several Reg. III GWs participated in civil disturbance details in Atlanta and at Stone Mountain. They also assisted with the Governor's Crime Suppression Initiative in Atlanta. GWs assisted with security at mass vaccination sites in Sandersville and Macon.

Cpl. Ben Payne attended several funerals and events as a member of the Honor Guard.

GW Saxon Campbell participated in two National Night Out events in McDuffie Co. Cpl. Timmerman and Cpl. Sartor assisted with a Safety Day at Fort Gordon. Cpl. Timmerman, GW Campbell, and GW Thompson participated in an Emergency Preparedness Day in Columbia Co.

GW Jeremy Reese, along with CEWC personnel conducted the first ever Wildlife Forensic Workshops. During these workshops, Georgia teachers and students from across the state were able to get a glimpse as to how GWs conduct investigations into wildlife taken by poachers.

GWs worked the GA Wildlife Federation's Turkeyrama/Fisharama and the Buckarama answering questions from hunters and anglers. The GWs also worked closely with both Ga. Military College and Georgia College and State University on recruitment efforts.

Sgt. Stanford's work unit assisted the Milledgeville Police with concentrated patrols and serving arrest warrants.

Sgt. Garthright's work unit took part in the Warren Co. Sportsman's Festival, the Morgan Co. Faith and Blue Festival, a Georgia Farm Bureau Safety Camp, a Hometown Heroes Event at the Ritz Carlton, the Morgan Co. Junior Deputy Camp, and a Kid's Fishing Event at A.H. Stephens State Park.



## **Boating Activity**

Reg. III GWs worked 17 drownings and 9 boating accidents.

## **Helping Hand**

In March, Sgt. Hobbins' section assisted the GBI with the search for a missing person in Wadley, GA. In June, they also assisted Washington Co. SO with the search for the body of a missing woman that had been murdered.

GWs assisted Game Management with duck banding and their annual goose survey on Clark's Hill Lake. Capt. Chaffin and GW Thompson assisted with a suicide by gunfire on Keg Creek WMA.

Sgt. Carter, Cpl. Sartor, and GW Campbell worked an early season 3-day rifle hunt on Clark's Hill WMA. During the hunt they documented 26 violations that included 17 Hunting Out of Season cases, several license issues, and Target Practicing on a WMA. A wanted felon from Florida was also arrested during the hunt.

GW Bingham arrested and charged a subject for DUI on a complaint at Elijah Clark SP.

Sgt. Carter's section worked numerous complaints of alcohol consumption at the beach areas on their parks. Plain clothes and surveillance details were utilized. These details resulted in over 20 violations being documented.

## Hunting & Fishing Activity

In August, Sgt. Hobbins' section assisted Reg. II officers with an in-depth hunting incident investigation involving a hog hunter that was shot by another hunter in the party. The victim was transported to Augusta where wardens interviewed all parties involved. The investigation led to several charges as well as a parole violation for one subject. All of those involved were convicted felons.

In January, Cpl. Payne was patrolling Di-Lane WMA for waterfowl activity and located several subjects that were hunting illegally. A total of 17 subjects were cited for hunting on a closed WMA.

In December, Cpl. Billips located a baited duck shoot in Washington Co. Three subjects were charged with Hunting Over Bait and various license violations.

GWs from Sgt. Carter's section worked four tree stand hunting incidents. One of these in Lincoln Co. and one in Columbia Co. each resulted in a fatality.

Cpl. Timmerman and GW Campbell located an eight-man duck roost shoot in Lincoln Co. – 16 violations were documented.

GW Bingham located deer bait on Corps property in Lincoln Co. The subject was later apprehended, and 5 violations were documented.

GW Campbell investigated a hunting without permission complaint in McDuffie Co. The culprit was later identified as a club member who was subsequently charged with Hunting Under the Influence.

Cpl. Sartor investigated two complaints of dumping deer carcasses in Wilkes Co. The violator was identified in each case and charged.

GW Thomson located turkey bait in Columbia Co. and was able to catch and charge three subjects with Hunting Big Game Over Bait.



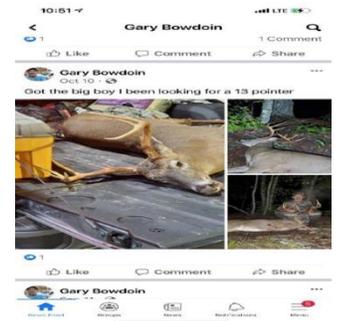
On Dec. 12, 2021, Westin Rabon was listening for shots in Jasper Co. He heard shots coming from the swamp where he and Sgt. Sweat found bait. Westin and Sgt. Sweat rounded up 3 hunters on the pond and noted the following violations: Hunting Over Bait, three citations for Hunting Waterfowl without Federal Waterfowl Stamp, one citation for Hunting Waterfowl with Lead Shot, and one of the hunters had an Unplugged Shotgun.

On Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Cpl. Smith and Sgt. Sweat responded to a tree stand incident in Lamar Co. The incident occurred when the 64-year-old white male lost his footing on the platform and fell approximately 12'. Due to his injuries, he was life flighted to Grady Memorial Hospital.



On Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Sgt. Sweat and GWFC Webb interviewed two subjects in Monroe Co. regarding a hunter possibly being over the limit of bucks. Webb had received information and located one of the males on Facebook, in which he had posted pictures of two bucks he had killed. After looking the male up on GoOutdoors, Webb found he had not recorded any deer at this time. After the interview, it was determined that one male had killed a 13 pointer and an 8-point buck, in which neither was tagged or recorded. Another male subject confessed to killing an 8-point buck, in which he did not possess a license. This male was also issued warnings for Hunting without a License and Hunting without a Big Game License. All three deer were killed before Thanksgiving and one 8-point rack was seized. More information on these subjects has been located and the investigation is ongoing.

On Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021, GW Niki Spencer was contacted by a landowner in Butts Co. whose juvenile son filmed three males hunting without permission. She arrived on scene and after a brief investigation 15 violations were documented. These violations included Hunting without Permission, Hunting Deer without Wearing Fluorescent Orange, multiple license violations, and Killing of Antlerless Deer. The individuals attempted to hide the doe by rolling it in a blue tarp and placing it in a trailer.



While assisting a disabled vessel on Lake Oconee around midnight, Cpl. Worth noticed a large group of people at a nearby boat ramp. While helping the occupants of the disabled vessel he continued to watch the group at the ramp and observed several individuals throwing a cast net. One adult male was standing in the water on the boat ramp casting a cast net. The individual in the water spotted Cpl. Worth as he approached and exited the water. The male attempted to hide his cast net and two bags of fish in the nearby woods. Worth located the hidden items and determined that the individuals were keeping game fish. Worth charged the one adult with Taking Game Fish by Illegal Methods and confiscated 119 game fish.

Cpl. Boles has been actively working numerous night hunting complaints around his county and throughout his work section that started as early as August. In fact, in Aug. he apprehended a group of six Hispanic males hunting from the road at night. Boles has apprehended two groups of night deer hunters in Morgan Co. and one group in Warren Co., along with one individual that was just shining for deer. Boles has devoted many hours to working these nighttime complaints and as a result, he has apprehended 14 individuals hunting from the road at night.

On Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, Cpl. Fisher was working waterfowl hunting in Bibb Co. when he heard several shots near a pond. Cpl. Fisher located the pond and observed several subjects flee on foot. Cpl. Fisher contacted GWs Hurley & Josh Cockrell who responded to the scene. The landowner was able to contact the hunters who eventually met with the GW at the pond. The pond was determined to be baited with whole kernel corn. The five hunters received citations for Hunting Waterfowl Over Bait as well as several license violations. The 8 ducks and one goose were donated to a needy family in the area.





On Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Cpl. Fisher patrolled Echeconnee Creek WMA in Bibb Co. where he encountered Mr. Laymon Jackson. Mr. Jackson was hunting small game by falconry means with a Red-Tailed Hawk.

On Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Cpl. Jon Segars responded to a subdivision in northern Baldwin Co. regarding a night deer hunting complaint. Several residents in the area heard a high-powered rifle shot come from a wooded area behind a residence well after legal shooting time had ended. Cpl. Segars contacted a suspect at the residence who denied having shot. Through clever investigative work, Cpl. Segars was able to find a freshly killed 9-point buck hidden behind a boat in the yard. The suspect later admitted to having shot the buck in this back yard. The suspect received a citation for Hunting Deer at Night and the deer was donated to a local food bank.



On the evening of Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021, GWs in Macon served felony arrest warrants on 2 suspects involved with the fatality boating incident that occurred earlier this year on Lake Tobesofkee. The third suspect was apprehended later in the week. On the recommendation of the Bibb Co. District Attorney a total of 9 felony charges and 3 misdemeanors have been brought against the 3 men.





*Cpl. Ricky Boles, Sgt. Matt Garthright, Cpl. Derrell Worth*



*Cpl. Ben Payne, GW Skyler Redmond, Sgt. Brian Hobbins, Cpl. Jeff Billips*



*Cpl. Wil Smith, GW David Webb, GW Westin Rabon, GW Niki Spencer, Sgt. Travis Sweat, GW Jeremy Reese (Not Pictured)*



*Sgt. Brian Carter, Cpl. Shane Sartor, Cpl. Bobby Timmerman, GW Saxon Campbell, GW Levi Thompson, GW Taylor Bingham*



*Cpl. David Fisher, GW Kevin Hurley, GW Erin McDade, GW Lamar Burns, Cpl. Jonathan Segars, GW Jason Bennett, Sgt. Bubba Stanford*

## Region IV- Metter



*L-R: GW Jack Thain, K-9 Case, GW Randell Meeks, GW John Kennedy, GW Luke Rabun, GW Cameron Dyal, GW Evan Nobles, GW Connor Moon, Sgt. Clint Martin, GW Clint Jarriel, GW Jordan Usher, Capt. Bob Lynn, Cpl. Mike Wilcox, Admin Support 1 Christina Colquitt, GW Jason Miller, Sgt. Chris Moore, Cpl. Jordan Crawford, AA3 April Thrift, Cpl. Patrick Gibbs, Sgt. Shaymus McNeely, Cpl. Rodney Horne, Sgt. Morty Wood, Cpl. Dan Stiles, Sgt. Kevin Joyce, Cpl. Tim Hutto and K-9 Titan.*

The Metter Region covers over 10,000 square miles of land mass in the upper and lower coastal plains of Georgia. Region IV covers 27 counties with vast amounts of farmland, planted pines and hardwood bottoms. Region IV Game Wardens patrol over 121,000 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**

#### **Office Staff**

The Metter office personnel consist of Captain Bob Lynn, Administrative Sergeant Kevin Joyce, Administrative Assistant 3 April Thrift, and Administrative Support 1 Christina Colquitt continue to provide customer service to the Region's field staff and public.

#### **Field Staff**

Sergeant Shaymus McNeely's section: Corporal Mike Wilcox, Corporal Jordan Crawford, GWFC Jason Miller, GWFC Jack Thain and K-9 Case.

Sergeant Chris Moore's section: Corporal Chase Altman, Corporal Patrick Gibbs, GWFC Clint Jarriel, GWFC Bobby Sanders, GWFC Randell Meeks and GW Jordan Usher.

Sergeant James McLaughlin's section: Corporal Dan Stiles, Corporal Rodney Horne, GW Cameron Dyal, GW Evan Nobles and GW Connor Moon.

Sergeant Morty Wood's section: Corporal Tim Hutto and K-9 Titan, GW John Kennedy, GW Luke Rabun and GW Bo Townsend.

## **Personnel Changes**

Region IV welcomed two new Wardens from the 35th Game Warden Academy to the Region:

- Connor Moon assigned to Laurens County
- Jordan Usher assigned to Montgomery County

## **Transfers**

- GW Austin Biggers transferred from Telfair County to Region I
- GW Bo Townsend transferred from Region V to Bacon County

## **Resignations**

- GW Chris Thompson from Irwin County
- GW Hunter Rush from Laurens County
- GW Kristie Carpenter from Tift County

## **Region Personnel Awards**

- NWTG GWFC Clint Jarriel
- TORCH GW Austin Biggers
- Game Warden of the Year Corporal Dan Stiles
- Hunter Education Instructor of the Year Dan Stiles
- Boating Safety Game Warden of the Year Corporal Patrick Gibbs

## **State Personnel Awards**

- Corporal Dan Stiles Hunter Education Instructor of the Year.

## **Rising to the occasion**

Georgia Game Wardens continued to show their versatility as need across the state grew. Game Wardens across the region and the state worked extra duty shifts to secure COVID-19 mass vaccination sites across the state alongside other state law enforcement agencies. Game Wardens from the Region also assisted other agencies in crime suppression details in the metro Atlanta area through out the year as crime rates continued to rise in that area.

## **Night Hunting**

None of the 27 counties have large metro areas, but instead, have large swaths of agricultural fields, planted pines stands and hardwood bottoms. Region IV Game Wardens continue to answer many complaints of night hunting in these rural areas. 38 stops for night hunting were conducted and resulted in 237 contacts for violations.

Corporal Rodney Horne stopped a vehicle for night deer hunting in Wheeler County. The 3 subjects were charged with hunting at night, hunting from a vehicle, hunting from a public road, and hunting without permission. The driver was also charged with fleeing and other traffic offenses.





In November 2020, GW John Kennedy passed a vehicle and observed a light shining into a field. After turning around and following the vehicle he observed the light shine into several other fields. Upon stopping the vehicle four guns were located along with a light. GW Kennedy also observed blood on clothes of the truck's occupants and observed three dead deer in the rear of the truck. All three occupants were charged with hunting from a road, hunting from a vehicle and hunting deer at night. The deer were turned over to the Wilcox County Sheriff's Office and distributed to needy families in the area.

### Investigations

Region Game Wardens continue to solve poaching cases through boots on the ground and with good tips coming into the Ranger Hotline.

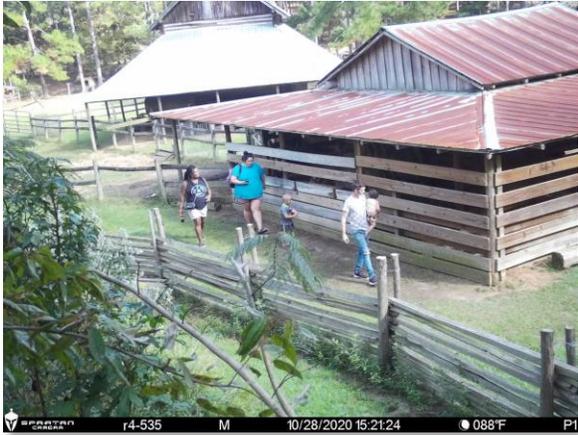
Game Warden Cameron Dyal worked a hunting without permission investigation in Jeff Davis County. GW Dyal spoke with several local people in the area, and they were able to identify the subject hunting without permission in the trail camera pictures. The deer's rack was seized, and the subject was charged with hunting without permission, hunting without a license, hunting without a big game license and failure to record harvest.



GW John Kennedy investigated a hunting complaint in Broxton, GA. The complaint was that a large buck was killed in late August 2020. After getting more details from the complainant, GW Kennedy and Sgt. Wood interviewed the poacher. One rack in velvet was confiscated. Citations for hunting out of season was issued and the meat was donated to Hunters for the Hungry

## Protecting the resources on state lands

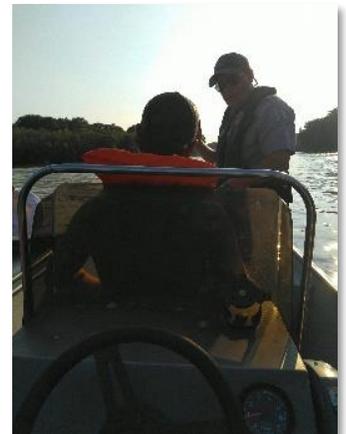
With COVID-19 continuing to dominate the news this last year, DNR's resources continued to be used more by people seeking recreational opportunities while maintaining social distancing. Region IV Game Wardens continued to patrol state parks as well as WMA's and PFA's. Gun ranges at Big Hammock and Bullard Creek became extremely popular locations for citizens of the state to enjoy. With the increase in use came the need to increase patrols to ensure compliance and to protect the state's resources. Over 130 contacts for violations were documented on state properties.



GW Luke Rabun received a tip from a concerned citizen about individuals that were stealing livestock from General Coffee State Park. After interviewing staff, GW Rabun learned that animals had recently gone missing, but they were suspected to have been taken by predators. After a thorough investigation, GW Rabun was able to capture a photo, with the use of a Spartan camera, of the perpetrators in possession of fowl belonging to the park. After interviewing the suspects, the male individual admitted to the thefts and was charged with Theft by Taking and Criminal Trespass.

## Boating and Fishing

Fishing in the spring of the year and boating in early summer are popular activities in the region. With many COVID-19 concerns and the rivers maintaining a higher average level than in past years, recreation on the rivers increased this past year. Majority of the contacts made were for minor licenses infractions and some safety issues such as personal flotation devices (PFD's). However, boating under the influence became more of a concern as several cases for it and possession of illegal drugs were made along the river systems in the region. Multiple search and rescues were also made in the past year. Pictured is GW Bobby Sanders conducting a BUI screening on the Altamaha River.



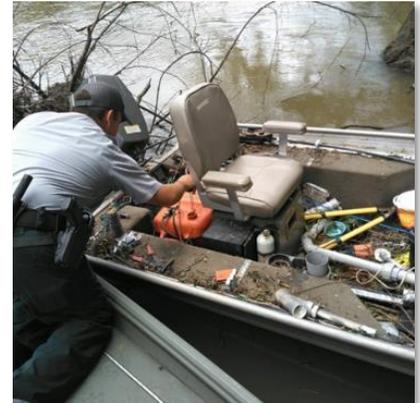
In June 2021, Cpl. Mike Wilcox checked a fisherman on the Ogeechee River. The fisherman had taken over the limit. Cpl. Wilcox confiscated 82 Red Breast Sunfish. The fish was donated to Jenkins County Sheriff's Office to be given to local families in need.

GW Rabun and Cpl. Hutto were patrolling the Ocmulgee River at Red Bluff Landing for boating activity when they encountered two individuals in a red Ford F150. The operator initiated a conversation with GW Rabun while he was preparing his vessel for launch. GW Rabun smelled a strong odor of marijuana coming from the passenger area of the vehicle. Cpl. Hutto searched the vehicle and found the driver and operator to be in possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and possession of suspected methamphetamine and marijuana. The driver was arrested by a Trooper with the Georgia State Patrol for DUI and Coffee County Drug Agents arrested the passenger on numerous drug charges.



GW Clint Jarriel and Cpl. Patrick Gibbs responded to a call in February 2021, concerning two stranded kayakers on the Ochoopee River near Jarriel's Bridge. The river was above flood stage and the current was too strong for the kayakers to maneuver their kayaks. One kayak overturned causing the occupant to be swept down river until he was able to grab a tree limb and hold on until the Game Wardens could reach him. The kayaker was checked out by EMS for hypothermia and released.

Cpl. Dan Stiles and GW Cameron Dyal responded to a report of a missing boater on the Ocmulgee River in Dodge County. The day before the missing male was camping on a sandbar with several other people and he borrowed a boat and never returned. After several hours of searching the missing subject and the boat were finally located the next day. The subject was in poor physical condition with injuries. He was transported back to the boat landing where he was taken to the Dodge County Hospital.



## Waterfowl

Waterfowl hunting continues to be popular within the region. Region Game Wardens continue to make cases against poachers hunting waterfowl over bait and hunting waterfowl after hours.



GW Bobby Sanders and Sgt. Chris Moore located an after-hours waterfowl shoot in Toombs County. Five individuals were involved in the shoot and possessed over the limit. Confiscated birds were donated to the Paul Anderson Youth Home.

## Community Involvement

It is important for Game Wardens to be known on a first name basis with the communities they serve. Wardens offer hunter safety classes in their county of assignment. Wardens also attend local events such as festivals and events held by local and national wildlife organizations. Career days at local high schools and colleges are important. These events provide an opportunity for younger generations to ask questions about a career in conservation law enforcement.



In February 2021, Cpl. Patrick Gibbs and GW Clint Jarriel hosted an “Outdoor Seminar” for up-and-coming outdoorsmen and women at the Evans County Wildlife Club. They discussed hunting and fishing techniques, wildlife calls, firearms handling and safety, conservation laws, and answered questions.

GW Clint Jarriel giving a safety briefing at the Youth Quota Dove hunt hosted at Indian Ford Farms Dove Field. Several Game Wardens attend this annual hunt to meet and greet youth hunters and their parents.



From time to time, Game Wardens get to serve the wildlife community as well. In January 2021, GW Luke Rabun and GW Kristie Carpenter responded to a call about an injured Bald Eagle in Irwin County. The eagle was captured without incident then taken to Philema Animal Hospital. The eagle was expected to make a full recovery thanks to their efforts.

## Region V- Albany



*L-R: Eric Isom, K-9 "Bo", Jeremy Bolen, Ryan Buice, Dean Gibson, Taylor Brown, Tony Cox, Jesse Harrison, Jim Atchley, Thomas Sibley, Blake Chafin, Rick Sellars, Steve Thomas, KP Boatright, Chaplain Daryl Brown, Drew Beverly, Quinn Fogle, Logan South, AOC Taylor Beamon, Al Greer, Greg Wade, and K-9 "Cuff" (Not Pictured: Scott Carroll, Greg Castelli, Steve Robinson, Josh Swain, and Eric White)*

The Region V Law Enforcement Division is comprised of 31 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-five POST certified Game Wardens, with twenty-three assigned field duties, and Captain Rick Sellars and Sergeant Quinn Fogle assigned administrative responsibilities. The region currently has one non-sworn administrative staff, Taylor Beamon, who was hired as the Administrative Assistant III after the retirement of Cindy Hynote. The region secretary position is currently vacant.



*Left to Right: Sgt. Quinn Fogle, AOC Taylor Beamon, Captain Rick Sellars*

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

**Lake Blackshear Work Section**

Sgt. Al Greer's work section includes Dooly, Crisp, Macon, Sumter, Schley, and Lee Counties. The Flint River WMA, Montezuma Bluffs WMA, Cordele Fish Hatchery, Georgia Veterans State Park and Lake Blackshear make up the State-Owned lands patrolled within this work section. Game Wardens assigned to this work unit include Cpl. Clint Martin, Cpl. Jesse Harrison, GW Blake Chafin, GW Logan South and GW Stetson Stevens.

The work section spent over 1,000 hours working citizen complaints this year. The section issued 587 total violator contacts, worked four boating incidents, and one drowning. The section charged nine subjects for hunting deer at night and charged five subjects with boating under the influence. Four convicted felons were caught hunting throughout the year.

Cpl. Clint Martin, GW Blake Chafin, GW Logan South, and GW Stetson Stevens charged six subjects for hunting ducks over bait.

Cpl. Martin was recently promoted to Sergeant in Region IV and GW Stevens took a lateral transfer to Dade County in Region I.



*GW Blake Chafin, GW Logan South, GW Stetson Stevens*

**Lake Harding Work Section**



*Sgt. Jeremy Bolen*

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, Goat Rock, along with several miles of the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers. Several state-owned properties are located within the work section, including 7 Wildlife Management Areas, 1 Public Fishing Area, and 2 State Parks. Game Wardens assigned to this work unit are Cpl. Josh Swain, Cpl. Eric Isom, GW Dean Gibson, GW Greg Castelli, and GW Ryan Buice.



*GW Ryan Buice*

Game Warden Ryan Buice and Game Warden Gibson located baited duck shoots in Marion and Talbot Counties. They cited 8 hunters for hunting waterfowl over bait and confiscated 16 ducks. In April of 2021, the Chattahoochee Fall Line Fort Perry WMA check station was broken into and a WRD ATV was stolen. Corporal Josh Swain reviewed the security video footage and was able to identify the subject with assistance from the Marion County SO. Cpl. Swain, Sgt. Bolen, GWFC Gibson, 2 deputies from the Marion County SO, and a Talbot County Investigator went to the subject's residence and recovered the stolen ATV. The subject was arrested and transported to the Marion County Jail.



*Marion County Deputy, Cpl. Josh Swain,  
and GW Dean Gibson*

In April of 2021, Sgt. Jeremy Bolen, Cpl. Eric Isom, and Game Warden Greg Castelli attended the Safe Kids of Columbus PFD event. Academy Sports and Outdoors donated \$2,000 to Safe Kids of Columbus, to acquire life jackets that will be put out at life jacket loaner stations around the water. Participating agencies included DNR, Columbus Police Department, and Columbus Fire/EMS.

On June 14, Cpl. Isom responded to a complaint of a suspicious vehicle driving around a closed gate on FDR State Park. Cpl. Isom located the vehicle and arrested 2 male occupants for breaking and entering, theft by taking, possession of a firearm by convicted felon, DUI (drugs), and criminal damage/criminal trespass. He recovered a speaker system, computer equipment and other electronic equipment.

Corporal Eric Isom received the Region V Boating Safety Officer of the Year Award as well as the Region V Game Warden of the Year Award. Game Warden Dean Gibson received the Region V NWTF Officer of the Year Award.

Work section Game Wardens responded to a total of 4 drownings, made 44 hunting over bait cases, and arrested 23 operators for boating under the influence.

## Lake Seminole Work Section

Sgt Cox's Work Section includes Decatur, Seminole, Baker, Grady, Early, and Miller County. Game Wardens in this work unit patrol Lake Seminole, Flint River, Chattahoochee River,



*GW KP Boatright, GW Taylor Brown, Sgt. Tony Cox, Cpl. Steve Thomas*

Ochlocknee River, Spring Creek and Tired Creek Reservoir. This year, Game Wardens made 16 BUI arrests along with 7 counts of Child Endangerment. They also investigated 3 boating incidents and 2 drownings on Lake Seminole. During waterfowl season, Game Wardens charged 33 subjects for hunting ducks over bait on seven different baited ponds and cited one subject for hunting waterfowl out of season. Due to his hard work G.W. Boatright received the Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award for the State. Cpl. Steve Thomas and G.W. Brown apprehended 2 subjects for killing turkeys out of season in Early County. Cpl. Steve Thomas worked a two-week investigation and charged a subject for killing a bear out of season in Grady

County. G.W. Boatright apprehended 4 subjects for killing an alligator without a permit while patrolling Lake Seminole during the early Teal season. The section Game Wardens arrested 13 subjects for hunting deer at night and apprehended four subjects for hunting under the influence. Sgt. Cox and G.W. Boatright received the 2021 Governor's Public Safety Award for their rescue of a duck hunter whose boat sank on Lake Seminole during a winter storm on Christmas Eve.



*Governor's Public Safety Award Ceremony*

## Albany Work Section

The Albany work section is comprised of Dougherty, Worth, Mitchell, Colquitt, Brooks and Thomas Counties, encompassing approximately 3000 square miles. The major waterways within these counties are Lake Worth, Kinchafoonee Creek, Muckalee Creek, Ochlocknee River, Flint River, and Little River. This work section holds 4 Wildlife Management Areas (Chickasawhatchee, Albany Nursery, Doerun Pitcher Plant Bog, Rivercreek) and 1 State Park (Reed Bingham).

This section is currently patrolled by three Game Wardens: Sgt. Greg Wade (K9 Cuff), Cpl. Eric White, and Game Warden Drew Beverly. Cpl. David Jones was recently detached to the Investigative Unit. Throughout the year, Game Wardens in the Albany section issued 550 citations and warnings. These violations ranged from hunting deer at night (3), felons in possession of firearms (2), hunting alligators out of season (6), hunting ducks, dove or big game over bait (51), hunting/fishing without permission (39), and license violations (75). In addition to the previous violations, one subject was arrested for Hunting Under the Influence and two subjects for Boating Under the Influence. The Game Wardens responded to 75 citizen's complaints of illegal activity, recovered four drowning victims, assisted local agencies with calls for service, and assisted with Crime Suppression details in Atlanta.



*Cpl. Eric White scooping a pond*

Sgt. Wade attended Use of Force Instructor training, Pistol 2, Quarterly K9 In-service, and High-Risk Man Tracking. Cpl. White is enrolled in the Professional Management Program (PMP) at Columbus State University. Game Warden Beverly completed Critical Incident Management Training and attended Georgia Crisis Intervention Training at Valdosta State. K9 Cuff has been utilized on several occasions to track suspects and for evidence recovery.



*Sgt. Greg Wade-Brooks County, Shot from Roadway, No License, Without Permission. K9 Cuff located blood for DNA testing*

## Lake Walter F. George Work Section



*Cpl. Scott Carroll, Cpl. Steve Robinson, Sgt. Jim Atchley, GW Thomas Sibley*

This work section covers Stewart, Randolph, Terrell, Webster, Quitman, Calhoun and Clay Counties. Sergeant Jim Atchley is the work unit supervisor, Game Warden First Class Thomas Sibley is assigned to Calhoun County, Corporal Steve Robinson is assigned to Stewart County and Corporal Scott Carroll is assigned to Terrell County. GW Bo Townsend was assigned to Webster County, but took a lateral transfer to Region IV earlier this year. The section Game Wardens are responsible for patrolling these seven counties, along with Lake Walter F. George, George T. Bagby State Park, Florence Marina State Park, Chickasawhatchee WMA, Hannahatchee WMA, Walter F. George WMA, Lanahassee WMA and the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge.

These officers have documented violations for hunting and fishing without permission, arrested multiple violators for felony dumping violations, hunting alligators out of season, BUI and Child Endangerment, hunting over bait on US government property and State-Owned Lands.



## Region VI- Brunswick



*Front row: Sgt. Mark Carson, License Tech Katelyn Bullard, Part-time secretary Rhonda Knight, AA3 Janette Senior. Second Row: Sgt. David Brady, Sgt. Cindy Miller, GW Tim Morris, GW Doug Chambers, GW Quintin Reed. Third Row: Cpl. Colte Shaske, Cpl. Jay Bright, GW Matt Tsiklistas, GW Zach Griffis, GW, Errol Hall, GW Lucas Barnard, GW Matt Thompson. Fourth Row: Sgt. Jason Shipes, Sgt. Chase Altman, Cpl. Bobby White, GW Judd Sears, Mechanic 3 Gary Denis. Fifth Row: GW Joseph Cowart, Cpl. Mark Pool. Cpl. Sam Williams, Cpl. Jon Penuel, Cpl. Daniel North, GW Arron Powell. Not pictured: Captain Chris Hodge, Cpl. Barry Britt, Cpl. Kiel Toney, Cpl. John Evans, and GW Johnny Robinette*

Ranging from I-75 over to Waycross and then up to Savannah, Region VI is comprised of 19 counties in Southeast Georgia. Region VI Game Wardens patrol all this area including 17 WMA and 4 VPA properties, 1 PFA, 10 State Parks, and the Economic Exclusionary Zone from 3 miles out to 200 miles offshore in the Atlantic Ocean. Region VI Game Wardens are extremely busy with all aspects of Conservation Law Enforcement.

The Region has seen personnel come and go with retirements of Sgt. Phillip Scott and Cpl. Randy Aspinwall. Game Wardens Errol Hall, Lucas Barnard and Matt Thompson graduated the Game Warden Academy in June 2021. And began their assignments in Camden and Glynn Counties.

Game Wardens Joseph Cowart transferred to Clinch County and Game Warden Cassidy Gerstorff transferred to Ware County. Game Warden Sam Williams was promoted to Corporal. Sgt. Patrick Dupree received the statewide 2021 Supervisor of the Year Award. Cpl. Daniel North received the 2021 Region VI Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award. GW Johnny Robinette received the 2021

Region VI Torch Award and GW Aaron Powell was the 2021 Region VI Game Warden of the Year.

**Chatham, Brian, and Liberty Work Unit**

**Sgt. Cindy Miller**

On Monday, 8/31/2020 Game Warden Douglas Chambers and Sergeant Cindy Miller along with NOAA Officers Ben Hughes and Michael Lind checked the shrimping vessel “Sea Fox” and determined the captain did not have his commercial fishing license or his commercial boat license. Three other people working on board did not have their commercial fishing licenses. The boat captain and passengers were issued citations/warnings and 850 pounds of shrimp was confiscated

April 2021- Game Warden Morris and Corporal Britt utilized a Spartan trail camera to identify a suspect who pulled a gate down with a truck on Richmond Hill WMA. The suspect was charged with damaging department property and driving on a closed road.

**Wayne, Long, Brantley, and Pierce Work Unit**

**Sgt. Chase Altman**

In October of 2020, Cpl. John Evans and GW Judd Sears investigated an illegal fishing complaint in Jesup, GA and found that the local owner of a Chinese Buffet restaurant was trapping fish in a county pond.

Cpl. John Evans responded on Christmas night to an injured bear that had been hit on the highway below Gardi, GA. Once there, the bear had to be dispatched and was discovered to be missing most of its front leg. It was found later that she had been in the area for years and there were lots of trail camera photos of her without the leg



the entire time. The bear was taken to a taxidermist where she will be mounted and used for educational purposes. The skull will be returned to DNR to be used for programs.



While patrolling Pierce County, Cpl. Evans and Sgt. Scott found a field being hunted for doves. Further investigation found the field to be baited heavily and birds had been hidden in the weeds near the field. All four men were cited for multiple violations and 50 doves were seized. The doves were donated to the Pierce County Sheriff’s Office.

On May 21<sup>st</sup>, Cpl. John Evans seized the head of two alligators from a Wayne County man. The head of the nearly 13-foot alligator that the man and his 14-year-old son had shot the weekend before was buried in a toolbox behind the field at their home. The skull of a nearly 12-foot alligator that had been killed several months prior was also in the same area. The violator was charged for both alligators and has agreed to pay for the taxidermy on both skulls so they can be donated to the local FFA Wildlife Program at Wayne County High School.

**Lowndes, Cook, Berrien, Echols, and Lanier Work Unit** **Sgt. Patrick Dupree**

While working a night hunting surveillance detail in Berrien County, GW Johnny Robinette observed a truck with a bright, light bar stop in the middle of the dirt road. Seconds later he heard 3 gunshots come from the vehicle. When GW Robinette attempted to stop the suspect vehicle, the vehicle began to flee. GW Robinette chased the fleeing vehicle for several miles while reaching speeds that were extremely dangerous for a dirt road. During the pursuit, a dead deer fell out of the back of the fleeing vehicle and shortly thereafter the fleeing vehicle came to an abrupt stop in the middle of the road. After securing the 4 suspects in the vehicle, GW Robinette was able to determine that the dead deer had been killed earlier that night. Each suspect was arrested and charged with hunting deer at night, hunting big game from a public road, hunting from a vehicle and the driver was charged with fleeing and attempting to elude; 4 rifles, 1 spotlight and the dead deer were all seized as evidence.

While working early morning duck hunting activity in Lowndes County, Cpl. Daniel North located a duck shoot and was able to get close to the swamp before the hunters emerged. While waiting for the hunters to walk out, Cpl. North could hear and see some of the individuals as they started to gather their birds. As one of the hunters emerged from the swamp, he immediately notified the rest of the group that the Game Warden's truck was there. One of the individuals was then overheard asking "what do I do with this?" Another hunter told him to hide it in the water and cover it up. Cpl. North then observed the hunter sink a white object in the water and pull leaves back over the top of it. While checking their licenses, Cpl. North asked if there was anything illegal in the swamp. All of the hunters stated that there was not. Upon inspection, Cpl. North was able to locate a box of lead shot shells that the hunter had sunk in the mud, and he also determined that the area had been baited. Multiple license violations as well as illegal ammunition and hunting over bait were documented and nine ducks were seized and donated to a local family in need.

**Ware, Charlton, Atkinson, Clinch Work Unit** **Sgt. Jason Shipes**

On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Sgt. Jason Shipes and GWFC Sam Williams were patrolling a hunting club in Charlton County where bear bait had been located a few days earlier when a gun shot was heard in an area that was known to be baited. The officers located two subjects in the area. After a short investigation, a bear was located that had been killed at a bait site. One subject was charged with hunting big game over bait and hunting bear without fluorescent orange. The second subject was charged with illegal enticement of game.

On September 26<sup>th</sup>, GWFC Sam Williams received a call from Charlton County Sheriff's Office about a dead bear near the scene of a vehicle crash. After arrival, the officer observed a bullet wound on the neck of the bear. There were also items often used to bait bear observed in the

roadway and in the back of the only vehicle involved in the crash. While photographing evidence, the officer realized that the wrecked vehicle matched a description of a vehicle he received a week prior that was observed on private property in Ware County where the complainant had located bear bait near a stand. During an interview with the driver of the vehicle, Cpl. Mark Pool and GWFC Williams determined that the subject had shot the bear on that property and was headed to the check station in Folkston when he crashed. Cpl. Tim Hutto and GW Westin Rabon joined the investigation on the property in Ware County. Based on the statements made during the interview, the officers located the stand and bear bait that matched the evidence observed at the scene of the vehicle crash. After collecting and photographing the evidence, the subject was charged with hunting big game over bait.

On September 6<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Jason Shipes and GWFC Sam Williams located a dove shoot on the edge of a pasture in Atkinson County. While checking licenses and bag limits, the officers observed cracked corn and sunflower seed that had been placed in a harrowed area. Cpl. Tim Hutto and

GW Westin Rabon responded to assist. A total of 158 dove were confiscated and eight subjects were charged with hunting over bait and hunting after obtaining bag limit.



**Glynn, Camden, and McIntosh Work Unit**

**Sgt. David Brady**

In September of 2020, Cpl. Jay Bright was working a night deer hunting investigation/ complaint in McIntosh County. Cpl. Bright apprehended the poachers one night after working the area only to find that they had killed this trophy deer earlier that night in McIntosh County.





In February of 2021, Cpl. Jay Bright encountered a man fishing in Glynn County. He observed him hiding fish in the marsh and was able to determine that he was not licensed and was a subject that had been caught previously for the same violation.



GW Zach Griffis & Sgt. David Brady were working North McIntosh County for inbound offshore fishing activity early in the summer of 2021. One vessel stop yielded these illegally caught red snapper and black sea bass. The case was referred to NOAA for Federal prosecution.



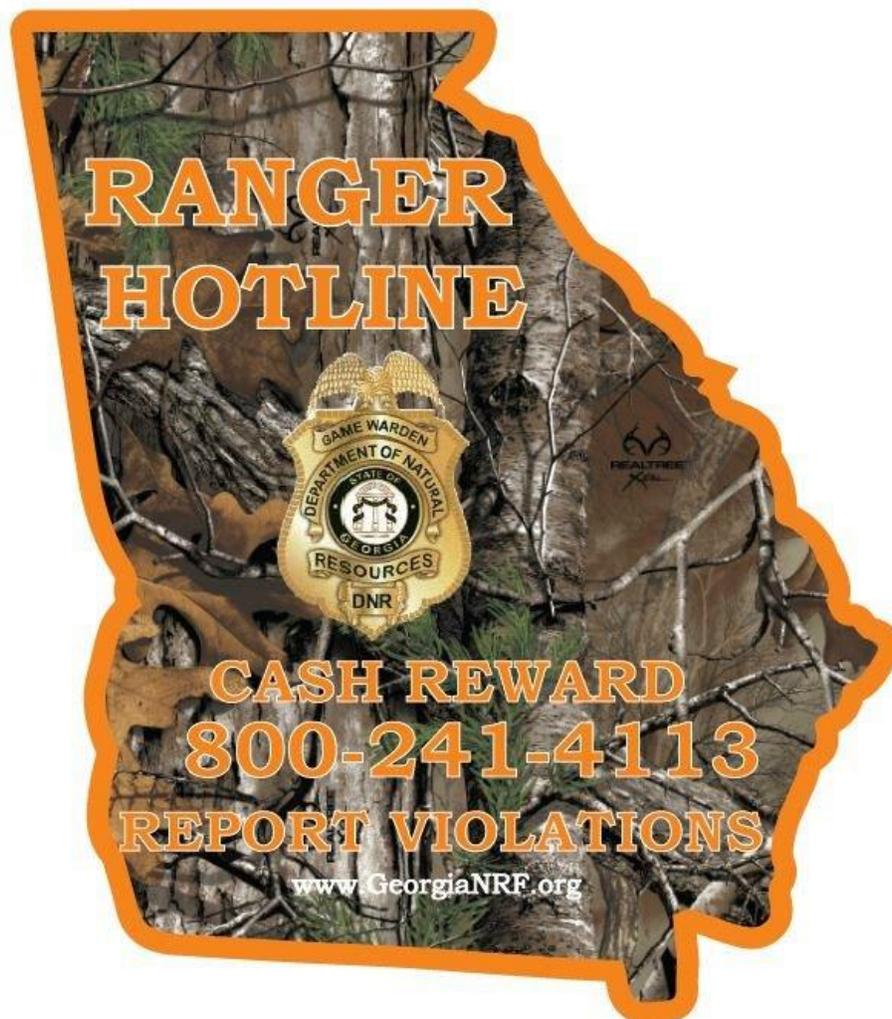
GW Matt Tsiklistas seized these illegally harvested shellfish in the summer of 2021. The individual that was picking the oysters and digging clams when the season was closed and was in an area that shellfish collection is prohibited.

GW's Zach Griffis and Jay Bright seized 13,000 pounds of shrimp illegally taken from Georgia waters during May of 2021. Working tirelessly throughout the early spring months while the shrimp were thick inside closed state waters, Game Wardens from the Camden, Glynn, McIntosh work section were able to slow down the "stealing" with totals seizures around 25,000 pounds.



### **Offshore Joint Enforcement Agreement with NOAA**

The Joint Agreement #19 between Georgia DNR and NOAA Office of Law Enforcement called for GADNR enforcement personnel to provide a total of 1,604 hours of marine law enforcement or related work under the agreement. Georgia has 5 Execution Priorities. They are Endangered Species, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, National Marine Sanctuaries Act, Marine Mammal Right Whale, and Lacey Act/International (IUU). 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. These patrols resulted in 6 state charges and 12 Federal Cases sent to NOAA OLE.



## **Investigative Unit**

The Investigative Unit (IU) is comprised of two full-time investigators, two detached investigators and one Intelligence Analyst. The IU is responsible for undercover investigations, administration of the Critical Incident Reconstruction Team (CIRT), the Marine Theft Unit (MTU) as well as investigation assistance to the Special Permit Unit (SPU). The primary function of the Investigative Unit is to provide field Game Wardens with investigative support. The Investigative Unit is able to fulfill this mission with the support of 13 Game Wardens that perform a collateral duty called "Regional Investigator". Regional Investigators assist the IU with overt and covert investigations. The IU also serves the field as a central point of contact for information sharing on a statewide level. In 2021, the Investigative Unit's Criminal Intelligence Analyst completed her Level 2 training which significantly expanded her support capabilities. Over the past 2 years all investigators and Analyst have completed the ZetX 40 Hour Advanced Cellular Investigations and Geofence 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 547 investigations and calls for assistance from the field and from other agencies (both in and out-of-state). These investigations were comprised of assistance with search warrants, 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 13 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 6 boating incidents, 3 hunting incidents and one fatality on a State Park.

### **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 122 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 9 of these stolen vessels.

## Special Permits Unit



The Georgia DNR Law Enforcement Division Special Permits Unit, headed by Lt. Wayne Hubbard, 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, with help from SPU Coordinator Jamie Hawkins, the Unit issued 2,213 permits, collecting approximately \$73,655 in generated fees.



## K-9 Unit

The Division continues to use K-9s to enhance patrol efforts by Game Wardens and to provide assistance to other agencies for man tracking and article searches. The dogs and their handlers are certified in Man-tracking, Apprehension, Article Recovery and Wildlife Detection, and the Unit played a part in numerous cases during the year. The complete unit participated in three different training sessions including an advanced firearms training course at GPSTC, and a joint training exercise with the Florida FWC K-9 unit. One notable case occurred in late February of 2021 when the entire Unit responded to Decatur County, after a Sheriff's Deputy was shot and killed, and located the gun that was used to shoot him.



## FY2021 K-9/Handler Teams

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

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

**Cpl. Eric Isom and K-9 Bo**

**Sgt. Greg Wade and K-9 Cuff**

**Cpl. Keith Page and K-9 Rio**

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

**GW Jared Wood and K-9 Judge**

## **Training Unit**

### **Game Warden Academy**

The 35<sup>th</sup> Game Warden Academy began on Sunday, January 10<sup>th</sup> at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth. Eleven cadets from across the state began training with three of the eleven cadets voluntarily withdrawing during the 23-week course. All of the remaining cadets, with the exception of one who declined due to severe allergies, voluntarily took the COVID 19 vaccine and the 35<sup>th</sup> was able to train for 23 consecutive weeks with no COVID related incidents or delays. COVID 19 protocols and other COVID-19 safety precautions for academy training were put in place to ensure the safety of our cadets and instructors until the Georgia Public Safety Training Center resumed normal operations on April 12, 2021. The cadets of the 35<sup>th</sup> Game Warden Academy graduated on June 18<sup>th</sup> and are currently out on Field Training in the Regions of assignment.



### **In-Service Training**

This year's in service training schedule was again dominated by the challenges posed by COVID-19. However, we have been able to complete annual firearm's re-qualifications X2 Taser re-certification training and our annual Standardized Field Sobriety and BUI Refresher training. The Division was able to purchase 40 additional X2 Tasers this year. Taser training was conducted in May and we currently have 116 X2 Tasers in the field. Game Warden's also completed the mandated Governor's Initiative Community Oriented Policing training. This year's training consisted of Cultural Awareness Training. The Division will be completing our annual fall firearm's in-service during the months of September, October and November at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. These two full days of training will include the recently updated Use of Force and De-escalation training programs, Use of Force Simulator Training, Shotgun Skills and Advanced Handgun Skills.

### **Special Operations Group Training**

Twenty members of the Division's Special Operations Group (SOG) attended 6 days and nights of Woodland Operations Training with soldiers from the Georgia National Guard Counter Drug Task Force. SOG Game Wardens received military training in land navigation, tactical team movement, patrol and reconnaissance operations, team development, and the use of cover and concealment. The courses main emphasis was on mission planning and operational leadership. The course concluded with live scenario training missions which were executed during both daylight and night hours. Twenty-one members of the Division's Special Operations Group (SOG) also attended the 32-hour Semi-auto Pistol Level II course at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. The SOG Game Wardens received advanced pistol training which focused on advance gun handling skills, shooting from cover and multiple threat engagement.



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

## Aviation Unit

The LED Aviation Unit provides Aerial support to all DNR Divisions as well as other state and federal agencies utilizing three Bell 407GX helicopters which are well equipped for the mission.

The Aviation Unit flew approximately 550 hours in support of the Divisions Game Wardens as they conducted their core mission of protecting the states waterways and woodland areas.

This consisted of flying support for missions 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 night deer poaching/spotlight patrols, searches for missing persons and drowning victims across the state. The Wildlife Resource Division (WRD) was provided aviation support during the survey season for Bald Eagles, Kestrel, Sandhill Cranes, Shore birds, as well as waterfowl surveys.



Coastal Support also included flights along the coast in support of surveys for sea turtles, dolphins, manatee tracking and tagging, as well as providing flight support for the U.S. EPA National Wetlands Condition assessment. In addition to the WRD and Coastal Resource Division Surveys, the unit flew missions to assist the Game Management Section with prescribed burns on the State WMA's. Coastal missions for EPD were flown in support of cleanup and inspection of coastal beaches due to the Golden Ray Shipwreck as needed.

Additionally, the Aviation Unit continued to assist in missions to support Federal and State Law Enforcement agencies in surveillance missions and ongoing investigations. Aerial Support was provided to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Marshals, United States Customs Air and Marine Division, Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, Georgia Emergency Management Agency and Homeland Security, along with many other agencies.

The DNR Aviation unit stands ready to continue providing support for all DNR missions, while continuing to support State and Federal agencies as needed.





## Honor Guard



### Honor Guard Members

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

### Honor Guard Details

- July 18, 2020 – Funeral detail for retired Game Warden Darrell Watson Lakeland, Georgia where honor guard members Cpl. Chase Altman presented the flag to his family.
- July 24, 2020 – Presentation of Colors and participated in the 34<sup>th</sup> Game Warden Academy Graduation Ceremony at the GPSTC in Forsyth, Georgia. Sgt. David Brady, Sgt. Brooks Varnell, Sgt. Derek Dillard, Cpl. Ben Payne, Cpl. Scott Carroll, Cpl. Kiel Toney, Cpl. Cody Jones and GWFC Dan Schay participated in the ceremony.
- August 22, 2020 – Presentation of Colors for the DNR LED Awards Banquet at Indian Springs State Park. Sgt. Brooks Varnell, Sgt. Thomas Sweat, Cpl. Scott Carroll and Cpl. Chase Altman participated in the ceremony.
- September 6, 2020 – Funeral visitation detail for Capt. Stan Elrod at Whitlock Funeral Home in Toccoa, Georgia where Sgt. Derek Dillard, Cpl. Kiel Toney, GWFC Dan Schay and GW Jeffery Turner participated in the detail.
- September 7, 2020 – Funeral visitation detail for Capt. Stan Elrod at Whitlock Funeral Home in Toccoa, Georgia where Cpl. Kiel Toney and GW Jeffery Turner participated in the detail.
- September 8, 2020 – Full honors funeral detail for the line of duty death of Capt. Stan Elrod in Toccoa, Georgia at Whitlock Funeral Home, the Georgia Baptist Convention and the Memorial Gardens Cemetery. Capt. Bob Holley, Sgt. Derek Dillard, Sgt. Brooks Varnell, Sgt. Jeremy Bolen, Sgt. David Brady, Sgt. Travis Sweat, Cpl. Scott Carroll, Cpl. Chase Altman, Cpl. Cody Jones, GWFC Dan Schay, GWFC Clint Jarriel and GW Jeffery Turner participated in the full honors detail.
- October 25, 2020 – Funeral detail for retired Game Warden Cpl. Dennis Aderholt in Stone Mountain, Georgia. Sgt. Brooks Varnell and GWFC Dan Schay participated in the detail and presented the flag to his family.
- November 14, 2020 – Funeral detail at the memorial service for retired Game Warden Lt. Col. Robert “Bob” Brown in Jonesboro, Georgia. Sgt. Jeremy Bolen and Cpl. Ben Payne participated in and presented the US Flag during the ceremony.
- December 18, 2020 – Funeral detail for GBI Agent James “Jamie” Sullivan in Statesboro, Georgia. Sgt. David Brady, Sgt. Travis Sweat and Cpl. Chase Altman participated in the ceremony where they folded and presented the US Flag.
- January 18, 2021 – Funeral detail for retired Game Warden Sergeant Hugh Elrod in Cleveland, Georgia where honor guard members Sgt. Brooks Varnell, Cpl. Cody Jones and GWFC Jeffery Turner folded and presented the US flag to the family.
- January 29, 2021 – Funeral detail for retired Game Warden Sergeant D.V. “Bunny” Grantham in Ambrose, Georgia where honor guard members Sgt. Jeremy Bolen, Sgt. David Brady and Cpl. Ben Payne folded and presented the US flag to his daughters.
- June 18, 2021 – Presentation of Colors and participated in the 35<sup>th</sup> Game Warden Academy Graduation Ceremony at the GPSTC in Forsyth, Georgia. Sgt. Travis Sweat, Sgt. David Brady, Cpl. Ben Payne, Cpl. Scott Carroll, Cpl. Kiel Toney, Cpl. Dan Schay and GWFC Jeffery Turner participated in the ceremony.

## Chaplains

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.



## DNR Chaplains

### Region I

Rev. Brandon Brooks  
Rev. Danny Cochran  
Rev. Tac Coley  
Dr. Rudy Ross

### Region II

Rev. Michael Burgamy

### Region III

Dr. Marc Crandlemire  
Rev. John Haney  
Dr. Rick Lanford  
Rev. Joel Vinson, Sr.

### Region IV

Rev. Chip Strickland  
Rev. Stacy Phillips

### Region V

Rev. Daryl Brown

### Region VI

Rev. Charles Houston, Jr.  
Rev. Gregory Loskoski

## Promotions:

Sgt. Mitch Oliver  
 GWFC2 Jason Miller  
 Cpl. Daniel North  
 Cpl. Colte Shaske  
 Cpl. Shane Sartor  
 GWFC2 Sam Williams  
 Sgt. Adam Loudermilk  
 Sgt. Quinn Fogle  
 Cpl. Eric White  
 Cpl. Dan Schay  
 Cpl. Beth Gilbert  
 Cpt. Derek Dillard  
 GWFC 2 Shane Brown  
 GWFC 2 Matt Johnson  
 GWFC 1 Jason Bennett  
 GWFC 1 Kevin Hurley  
 GWFC 1 Trae Paulk  
 GWFC 1 John Rhodes  
 GWFC 1 Ryan Cleveland  
 GWFC 1 Noah Osborne  
 GWFC 1 Jeff Turner  
 GWFC 1 Cameron Dyal  
 GWFC 1 Cassidy Gerstorff  
 GWFC 1 Dean Gibson  
 GWFC 1 Thomas Sibley  
 GWFC 1 Logan South  
 GWFC 1 Tyler Lewis  
 GWFC 1 Garrett Pownall  
 GWFC 1 Will Smith  
 GWFC 1 Philip Stout  
 GW 2 Taylor Bingham  
 GW 2 K.P. Boatright  
 GW 2 Bo Buice  
 GW 2 Bo Townsend  
 GW 2 Hunter Bowman  
 GW 2 David Wright  
 GW 2 Westin Rabon  
 GW 2 Hunter Rush  
 GW 2 Taylor Gilmore  
 Sgt. Ben Cunningham  
 Sgt. Tim Vickery  
 GWFC 1 Brock Hoyt  
 GWFC 1 Steve Martinez  
 GWFC 1 Ryan Shorter  
 GWFC 1 Caleb Thomas  
 GWFC 1 Bryan Price  
 GWFC 1 Kristie Carpenter  
 GWFC 1 John Kennedy  
 GWFC 1 Taylor Brown  
 GWFC 1 Zach Griffis

GWFC 1 Johnny Robinette  
 GWFC 1 Matt Tsiklistas  
 Cpl. David Jones  
 Cpl. Frank Pucci  
 GWFC 2 Bobby Sanders  
 Cpl. Shane Brown  
 Cpl. Joe Hill  
 Cpl. Sam Williams  
 Lt. Brian Adams  
 Sgt. Shawn Elmore

## Retirements:

Sgt. Ellis Wynn  
 Sgt. David Ruddell  
 Cpl. Ryan Swain  
 Sgt. Greg Colson  
 Cpl. Tommy Daughtrey  
 Sgt. Mike Barr  
 Cpl. Kevin Dyer  
 GWFC1 Ken Lalumiere  
 Sgt. Bo Kelly  
 Lt. Chad Welch

<b>Activity Summary</b>		<b>FY2021</b>
Hunter Ed Programs		86
I&E Programs		455
Boating Safety Programs		157
Hunter Development		0
<b>Total Programs</b>		<b>1,127</b>
Water SAR Cases		192
Water SAR Hours		3,428
Vessels Assisted		219
Water Persons Asst.		519
Land SAR Cases		111
Land SAR Hours		1,325
Land Persons Asst.		260
Hunting Incidents		28
Boating Incidents		126
Drownings		61
Hunting License Checks	29,880	
Fishing License Checks	36,265	
Comm. License Checks	221	
Total License Checks	66,366	
Boat Checks	34,505	
Boating Contacts	4,481	
Hunting Contacts	3,321	
Fishing Contacts	2,012	
Trapping Contacts	29	
Environmental Contacts	427	
Other Contacts	3,504	
<b>Total Contacts</b>		<b>13,774</b>



# 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](http://www.gadnrle.org) for more information*



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



**Support those who protect our natural resources!**