



## **BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

### **MONTHLY REPORT May 16, 2021 – June 15, 2021**

#### **HUNTER EDUCATION/NASP/R3**

##### **Hunter Education (Joe Leskie, Keith Griglak, Sam Forlenza)**

Fourteen hunter education class days were held statewide during this reporting period with 389 firearm students and 180 archery students in attendance. Attendance rates are running higher than in previous years at approximately 80-percent. Hunter Education staff and their devoted instructors continue to excel in meeting expectations to the adapted program.

Staff responded to 51 duplicate Hunter Education card requests during the report period.

Staff conducted a new Hunter Education Instructor Training for one individual during the report period.

Staff attended the 2021 International Hunter Education Association's (IHEA) virtual conference presented by Kalkomey Enterprises, LLC. The conference consisted of IHEA updates from 2020 as well as presentations on IHEA World updates. Various topics, including Research Partner presentations, Partner with a Payer and Hunter Incident Research were discussed. The IHEA is planning on having its 2022 in-person conference next year in Palm Beach, Florida.

Staff prepared and presented the Division Representative Report to members of the Warren County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs at their May meeting.

Staff attended a meeting on the Division's range brochure where edits were provided to update the document.

### **R3 (Joe Leskie, Ryan Risher, Brianna Merriel)**

Staff prepared, edited, and posted the second R3 Newsletter for June 2021. It was distributed via the GovDelivery listserv system and posted on the Division's R3 landing page.

Staff participated in a meeting to assist with the development of R3-related *Insight* reports that will be integrated with the electronic licensing system. Establishment of these reports will greatly aid in understanding hunting and angling churn rates (i.e., the rate at which customers stop doing business with an entity), attrition (customer loss over a given period), and overall involvement of new and existing participants.

Staff began making plans for a *Tree Stand Safety and Placement* webinar in July. A *Hunting Etiquette on Public Land* webinar is also being tentatively scheduled for August.

Staff assisted in revising signage for the Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area. The signs will be produced by Ducks Unlimited and are scheduled for completion by the end of June.

Staff cancelled an introductory target shooting event at the Pine Valley Gun Club in Berlin due to inclement weather. The next shooting event is scheduled for July 15.

All staff virtually attended the annual Director's Division Meeting on May 26.

### **NASP® (Katie Paey)**

Three NASP Basic Archery Instructor (BAI) Trainings were held this month. One new school and 19 BAIs were certified.

Training equipment was delivered to and picked up from several BAI training locations.

One BAI Training has been scheduled for a new school in late June.

Two emails were sent to active and suspended BAIs with instructions on submitting annual reports to reinstate their certifications.

Guidance was provided to schools seeking assistance in ordering NASP equipment.

Assistance was also provided to BAIs submitting annual NASP reports.

## **AQUATIC EDUCATION (Karen Byrne)**

### **Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center**

A training day was held for 2021 interns. This year, these individuals will again be assisting with the ongoing Northern diamondback terrapin nesting study (this marks the 20<sup>th</sup> year) that takes place on Sedge Island. The interns will also be assisting with group programs.

Summer programs will be offered on weekends at Sedge Island. In addition, the Sedge Island Field and Research Experience for high school students and the Sedge Island Field Experience for middle school students will be offered as three-day programs. Applications have been posted and registrations are being processed.

### **Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament**

The Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament was held on May 23 at Island Beach State Park in Ocean County. Four hundred fifty-five people registered for the tournament, including four high school teams. This year, the tournament partnering organizations (New Jersey Beach Buggy Association, Jersey Coast Anglers Association, and the New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs) covered the registration costs for high school team participants. Tyler Bender of Milford won the Tournament with a 21 ½-inch bluefish. Manasquan High School won the High School Team Category with a 20 5/8-inch summer flounder. While not many fish were entered, many participants provided feedback of having a great day on the beach with family and friends.

### **Angler Recruitment, Retention Reactivation (R3)**

A Surf Fishing Techniques webinar was held on May 21 for more than 1,400 registrants. The class was posted on the DEP's YouTube Channel attracting over 2,000 views.

Staff met with Assistant Director L. Barno to discuss establishing an Angler R3 capstone project for senior students. Once developed, the multifaceted assignment will serve as a culminating academic experience in their scholastic careers.

Staff attended a Microsoft Insights meeting.

### **Green Eggs and Sand**

A spawning beach trip was held for participants of the hybrid Green Eggs and Sand workshop. It was a beautiful night on Delaware Bay with lots of horseshoe crabs spawning. Educators cycled through learning stations on horseshoe crab anatomy as well as instruction on conducting a spawning survey, identifying field research opportunities with students, and observing horseshoe crab eggs.

## **Other Activities**

Staff assisted with the Division Meeting held on May 26.

## **WEBSITE ACTIVITY (Paul Tarlowe)**

### **New and Updated Pages, Images, and Documents**

One (1) new page was posted this report period for one-day programs at Sedge Island. Seven (7) “News” pages were posted.

Approximately eighty-eight (88) pages were revised/updated during the report period, including multiple updates on the HOFNOD Youth Fishing Challenge and Skillful Angler Leader Board pages.

Twenty-five (25) images were edited and posted, including those for the Skillful Angler Leader Board (8), Artificial Reef Program (6), Fishing (6), and five others.

Approximately twenty-seven (27) documents were edited in or converted to PDF format. These included: Council/Committee Documents (five documents in two .zip files); Minutes/Agendas (9); Bureau Reports (9 in 1 .zip file); WMA Closure Maps (5); WMA Maps (2) and eleven (11) other documents.

### **Listserv Messages**

Five (5) messages were drafted and sent to various e-mail lists and outdoor writers. Assistance was provided to staff for several additional messages.

### **Analytics**

The number of hits on the homepage in May was 22,862; an average of 738 hits per day. It is a decrease of 31,600 hits from May 2020.

The ten most visited pages in May were: Fishing License Information – 22,243; License Information – 15,251; Saltwater Fishing – 9,039; Regulations – 9,038; Fluke Information – 7,419; Trout Stocking Schedule – 6,940; Places to Fish – 5,409; Striped Bass Bonus Program – 5,151; License Agents – 4,487; and Fishing Information – 4,487.

Other popular pages were: Hunter Education – 4,324; Hunting – 4,021; Freshwater Fishing – 3,958; Marine Licenses – 3,795; Spring Trout Information – 3,702; Ranges – 3,541; Hunting License Information – 3,541; Contact Us – 3,273; Turkey Information – 3,050; and Trout Fishing Access – 2,856.

The most requested PDFs this report period in descending order were: Snakes of New Jersey; Marine Regulations Summary; Snake ID at a Glance; Wildlife Rehabilitators; Turkey

Regulations; R3 Newsletter; Saltwater Fishing Guide; Snake ID at a Glance – South Jersey; Freshwater Fishing Digest; Marine Seasons Chart; and Bear Facts for Kids.

### **Responses to the Public**

Responses were made to approximately 280 e-mail messages. Additionally, responses were sent to twenty-four (24) referrals from the Assistant Commissioner's Office and eleven (11) messages from the DEP Public Access Center phone line.

### **Additional Activities**

Additional activities included virtual meetings on training a new website coordinator; migration to WordPress; weekly social media meetings; and Commissioner's Updates.

This monthly report is my final submission, as my retirement is effective July 1, 2021. It has been an honor and privilege to serve the residents of and visitors to New Jersey via my employment with the Division of Fish and Wildlife since 1985.

For further information about the Division's Website contact Al Ivany.

## **WILDLIFE INFORMATION/DIGEST EDITOR - TRENTON (Cindy Kuenstner)**

### ***Digest Production***

Production continues on the hunting Digest, currently in the early review stage.

Preliminary planning is underway within the Marine Fisheries Administration to develop the 2022 Marine Digest.

### **Outstanding Deer Program**

Several hunters were referred to official measurers to have their deer scored.

### **Suburban Deer Management and Other Public Outreach**

Staff met with Green Acres Chief Yeany and four colleagues to discuss public access on Green Acres encumbered parklands as that relates to hunting, including for deer and small game, both for management and recreation. Staff had previously brought to light concerns where county and municipal entities have allowed hunting use agreements on their lands that are in conflict with public access, excluding other hunters from enjoying select public properties. Our discussion affects Green Acres policy and future rule changes.

## **Fish and Wildlife's Facebook and Instagram Pages**

Staff monitors posts that generate considerable follower comments. Photos are provided to accompany posts as requested.

**Other work completed during this reporting period:** observed DEP Acting Commissioner LaTourette's weekly broadcasts; observed the Division's virtual meeting; continued reviewing, editing, comparing and verifying materials provided for the revised hunting Digest; networked with colleagues about Digest content and layout; interacted with the proud parent of a successful youth turkey hunter submitting photos and a story for consideration on the youth page in the hunting Digest; participated in several hunting Digest status meetings with colleagues; prepared extensive preliminary comments on this Digest pass for colleagues to clarify, remedy or replace content; cataloged wildlife and fishing photos submitted by an amateur photographer-hunter; revised a notice for the Digest on the status of a game species for approval by the Communications Office; discussed with several colleagues about respectful hunter harvest photos; completed the Americans With Disabilities Act online training; participated in another meeting with the publisher to discuss content and timing of the hunting Digest and assisted, then referred, a representative of Kingwood Township to our freshwater fisheries biologists regarding a fish kill in a municipal pond.

## **WILDLIFE INFORMATION - TRENTON (Kathy Porutski)**

**Internal Communication (IC) topics that were *written or edited* and sent out this month include:**

Division-wide Virtual Meeting Wednesday, May 26  
2021 Wild Turkey Brood Sighting Survey  
NOV Posting – Division of Parks and Forestry (Agency Services Representative Trainee)  
Division Meeting on GoToWebinar  
Staff Required to Use REVISED Electronic Signature  
Reminder -- Division Meeting Today  
Passing of Northern Region Hunter Education Instructor Pat Worth  
Staff Asked to Complete Post Meeting Survey  
Upcoming Contractual Across-The-Board Increases  
Site Remediation and Waste Program (Section Chief)  
NOV Posting – Emergency Management Program (Communications Operator Trainee)  
NOV Posting Extension – Emergency Management Program (Comm. Operator Trainee)  
May Bureau Reports  
NOV Posting – Watershed and Land Management Program (Environmental Services Trainee)  
Paul Tarlowe (Bureau of Information & Education – Pequest) Has Decided to Retire!  
NOV Posting – Compliance and Enforcement Program (Hourly Administrative Analyst)  
NOV Posting – Office of Occupational Health & Safety (Research Scientist 1)  
Governor Murphy Declares Juneteenth A State Holiday  
NOV Posting – Division of Fish and Wildlife (Biologist Trainee)

## **Spotlight *Announcements* Created w/ Images:**

**Honor the Red, White, and Blue -- Flag Day, June 14**

**Juneteenth – State Holiday, June 18**

**Celebrate Father’s Day – June 20, 2021**

**First Day of Summer – June 21, 2021**

**Also, during this reporting period:** the Bureau of Information and Education’s Monthly Report for May was compiled and edited; Commissioner’s Team Meetings were remotely attended; a Division Meeting was remotely attended on 5/26; photos were posted to a Kudos Board for a retiring staff member; printing procedures for the saltwater regulation cards were provided to the Division’s Marine Enforcement Unit; work has begun on the FY21 Annual Report (a new cover design was created and an I&E highlight was drafted); and the employee IC list was revised to reflect new staff members.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Jonathan Carlucci)**

### **Publications/Graphics**

- Free Fishing Day graphics created for social media
- Migratory Waterfowl Season Information Cards edited for 2021-22
- E-mail banners created for Marine Fisheries Shell Recycling Program
- Hunting Digest full page ad on the Sport Fish Restoration Program
- Black Bear Warning signs edited; print-ready art created; DEP approvals secured; printing request completed
- Headers/Banners created for group e-mail lists
- Program logo versions shared with staff

### **Photography/Videography**

- Holly Farm video and images shared with staff
- 139 photos in DFW e-mail resource from the public were sorted, renamed, and shared
- Visually observed and supported pilot for Carters Creek vessel deployment, event documented with stills and video
- Designed and built floating rig for time-lapse camera with Pex (flexible pipe), fittings and foam
- Uploaded images from stills and four underwater cameras
- Stock photo request fulfilled
- Higbee Beach WMA site visited, video and stills taken and uploaded for staff
- City of Patterson stills, and additional footage taken for Green Acres video
- Filming request submitted for potential sites
- Patterson Falls stills taken at Green Acres event with DEP Commissioner
- General Unmanned Aerial Vehicle maintenance completed

## Other

- Unmanned Aircraft Systems Group Teams Meetings attended
- Teams Meeting with staff on Artificial Reef Guide
- DEP Communications Teams Meeting attended
- FAA safety guidelines meeting attended

## PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Matt Hencheck)

### Video Production

- *Green Acres 60<sup>th</sup> Celebration* – DEP’s Green Acres program is celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To commemorate the achievement, staff created the following four videos:
  - *An Interview with DEP Commissioner Shawn LaTourette* – DEP Commissioner Shawn LaTourette narrates a video highlighting the many positive works attributed to the Green Acres program and its staff.
  - *A Resident of Kingwood Township (Hunterdon County) Acknowledges Green Acres* – A video highlighting one resident of Kingwood Township who emailed Green Acres to recognize their work in conserving a local area where she and her family frequent.
  - *An Interview with Green Acres Director Martha Sapp* – Director Martha Sapp discusses the variety of work accomplished by Green Acres over its 60-year history and the staff members who made it all possible.
  - *Patterson Mayor Andre Sayegh Expresses Appreciation to Green Acres* – Mayor Andre Sayegh discusses the role DEP’s Green Acres program has played in conserving important parts of the city and the positive relationship that has grown between the two entities as they look forward to the future.
- *Artificial Reef Program: Fishing Vessel Carter’s Creek Deployment on Manasquan Inlet* video –a recent artificial reef deployment by the Division’s Bureau of Marine Fisheries is highlighted. DEP Commissioner Shawn LaTourette and several DFW/DEP staff members are filmed as they witness the deployment.



## **SOCIAL MEDIA (Katie Paey)**

### **Facebook**

The DFW Facebook (FB) page had **40,022 followers** and **37,712 likes** at the end of this reporting period.

Twenty-eight (**28**) Facebook posts were posted this period. Posts include photographs and video taken by staff, graphic pieces created for special promotions and shared posts from other pages.

Post topics included: HOFNOD Youth Fishing Challenge, Surf Fishing Webinar, R3 Program Availability, Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament (GSFT), Endangered Species Day, weekly Go Fish Friday promotions, World Turtle Day, fishing web application, GSFT winners, artificial reefs, slow down for turtles, CVA pump-out video, WMA area closures, circle hooks for striped bass, Free Fishing Day, Memorial Day, Green Acres 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, National Fishing and Boating Week, turtle nesting season, illegally dumped boat on Colliers Mills WMA, Pollinator Webinar, young wildlife reminder, Seafood Finder application, Bureau of Land Management road resurfacing projects, and black bear safety tips.

**Posts with the most reach and engagement this period** – **Reach** is the number of unique people who have seen content associated with our Facebook page. **Engagement** is post clicks, likes, comments and shares (any action someone takes on the page or post):

**5/27** – WMA Area Closures - reached **167,970** people, **47,150** engagements

**6/7** – Help Identify This Dumped Boat - reached **123,181** people, **25,863** engagements

Staff continues to like and respond to comments and other questions on our DFW FB page in post comment threads, direct messages to our page, event postings and outside timeline posts.

### **Instagram**

The DFW Instagram page had **10,268 followers** at the end of this reporting period.

Seventeen (**17**) Instagram posts were posted this period. Posts include photographs and video taken by staff, and graphic pieces created for promotions.

Post topics included: Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament, Endangered Species Day, weekly Go Fish Fridays promotions, World Turtle Day, GSFT winners, slow down for turtles, WMA area closures, circle hooks and striped bass, Free Fishing Day, Memorial Day, National Fishing and Boating Week, turtle nesting season, illegally dumped boat on Colliers Mills WMA, young wildlife reminder, and black bear safety tips.

Five (5) Instagram stories were posted this period. Story topics included daily trout stocking locations, Area Closure Notice, swipe up for trout stocking allocation, and a Locavore webinar.

### **Instagram posts with the most reach this period –**

**5/27** – WMA Area Closures - reached **6,753** people

**6/7** – Help Identify This Dumped Boat - reached **6,583** people

Staff monitored and responded to comments and private messages.

### **Other Activities**

- Participated in weekly Social Media/GovDelivery Planning Meetings
- Completed the required Americans with Disabilities Act e-Learning class
- Edits were made to the Range Brochure draft and a meeting was held on 6/15 with Bureau of Land Management and Hunter Education staff to make final decisions on proper language.
- Attended Virtual Division Staff Meeting on 5/26

***Content for Facebook and Instagram is continuously needed. If you have ideas for a Social Media post, please contact [Katie.Paey@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Katie.Paey@dep.nj.gov).***

### **WILDLIFE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

**Pequest Natural Resource Education Program (Linda DiPiano, Jessica Griglak, Chris Lido, Alexandra Clark, Steve Verdi, and Tom Hill)**

No program requests were received for the summer or fall.

The Pequest calendar, group schedule and volunteer schedule continue to be maintained.

Staff continues to check voicemail remotely. Calls are returned or messages sent as needed.

An additional meeting was held with Department of Treasury and DEP staff to discuss the Request for Proposal (RFP) regarding building and installation of pre-designed exhibits. At this meeting, it was finally determined that DEP Construction Management Specialist Ed Mulvan will lead the project.

The roof replacement project has started.

The water line replacement project continues.

The maintenance of grounds is ongoing. Picnic tables are being rebuilt.

### **Trout in the Classroom**

Communication with teachers continues as school instruction changes between in-person and virtual.

A monthly newsletter was developed and sent to teachers.

Registration for the 2021-22 school year has opened.

### **Angler Recruitment, Retention Reactivation (R3)**

A Surf Fishing Techniques webinar was held.

### **Other**

Work on the Record Fish Program continues.

Two webinars were attended during this reporting period – *Natural Start Forum: Removing Barriers to Outdoor Gear* and *The Sum of Us: A Conversation with Heather McGhee and Dr. Gail Christopher*.

Staff attended the virtual Division meeting on 5/26.

### **Hooked on Fishing - Not on Drugs (HOFNOD) Program (Liz Jackson, Alanna Newmark)**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Fishing Challenge was held on Free Fishing Day – Saturday, June 5. Staff participated in an interview on Rack & Fin Radio to help promote the event. This year, 30 sites registered to participate. As of this reporting period, feedback showed 17 sites reporting 541 participants.

Staff is developing a hybrid HOFNOD leader training program. The format will consist of videos, recorded lectures and in-person field experiences. A platform to host the training is still being sought.

Teams are gearing up for the fishing season. Several have returned to in-person meetings, including Keepin' It Reel (Belvidere), Fishy Tales at Ben Franklin School (Newark), Team Linden (Linden), and Tightlines 4H Fishing Club (Cape May). Jersey Devil Kids Camp is scheduled to start meeting in July.

### **BLACK BEAR EDUCATION PROGRAM (Michelle Smith)**

#### **Black Bear Education Program**

During this reporting period, Northern Region State Parks received more than 32,000 *Bear Safety Camper Cards*, 5,000 *Know the Bear Facts* brochures, 4,800 *Know the Bear Facts for Kids* activity booklets, and 2,000 Tyvek *Bear Safety Signs* for distribution. Additional copies of the bear safety literature and the *Living with New Jersey Black Bears* DVD were mailed to the public upon request.

The Bear Safety sign design was updated, and another 6,500 copies will be reprinted for distribution.

A social media post to promote tips for black bear safety was edited. Once posted, it will also be shared with the Department's Office of Local Government Assistance for distribution to all mayors.

*A Bear Education and Public Safety Video* meeting was held to discuss further edits. When finalized, the video will be placed on DEP's YouTube page to increase public awareness about safely coexisting with black bears. In addition to safety guidelines, the production includes information on black bear biology and current Division research and management efforts. Information about the YouTube video was also posted on the Division website.

### **Division Website Development**

Website development meetings were coordinated and attended to review the following topics: conservation narratives, wildlife narratives, the freshwater fishing wireframe (i.e., page schematic), license and permit information, and marine content. The narratives and wire frame were reviewed, and feedback provided to the website developers along with the freshwater fisheries narrative.

### **Wildlife Habitat Supporter Donation Program**

A meeting was held to discuss updates on program development and the prospect of hiring a state contract vendor to develop a multi-media promotional marketing campaign.

### **Outreach Group**

In-house requests were submitted via the Outreach Group Project Request form and were distributed to appropriate staff who could offer assistance with videography, photography, and drone work.

Meetings were attended to discuss the Division's drone policies and the range brochure.

In response to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service audit regarding compliance with closed captioning requirements, all Division videos stored on the *Discover DEP* YouTube channel were reviewed and edited for adherence to the directive. An inventory list was created to track all agency videos to ensure closed captioning.