

**NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife**  
**Monthly Highlights**  
**Bureau of Law Enforcement**  
**June 21, 2021- July 20, 2021**

J. Sean Cianciulli, Chief  
Frank Panico, Deputy Chief  
Jason Snellbaker, Deputy Chief  
L. Anne Quirk, Captain – Administration  
Tom O'Rourke, Lieutenant - Training  
Paul Toppin, Lieutenant– Training  
Joseph Soell, Conservation Police Officer - Administration

**Northern Region (908) 735-8240**

Douglas Applegate, Captain  
Steven Sutton, Lieutenant (District 1)  
Joseph Kuechler, Lieutenant (District 2)  
Vacant, Lieutenant Investigator  
Vacant, Administrative Assistant 1

**Central Region (609) 259-2120**

Shannon Martiak, Captain  
Bryan Mascio, Lieutenant (District 3)  
Vacant, Lieutenant (District 4)  
Vacant, Lieutenant Investigator  
Shari Irick, Technical Assistant 2

**Southern Region (856) 629-0555**

Lisa Lacroix, Captain  
Zane Batten, Lieutenant (District 5)  
Craig James, Lieutenant (District 6)  
Vacant, Lieutenant Investigator  
Sue Canale, Agency Services Representative

**Marine Region (609) 748-2050**

Brian Scott, Captain  
Vacant, Lieutenant (District 7)  
Ryan Harp, Lieutenant (District 8)  
Chris Petruccelli, Lieutenant (District 9)  
Vacant, Lieutenant Investigator  
Noreen White, Agency Services Representative

Conservation Police Officers report a total of 5664.3 hours of duty (6594.3 - 2020). These hours are charged to the following categories of duty:

	<u><b>2021</b></u>	<u><b>2020</b></u>
Total Law Enforcement	3919.1	5016.8
Fishing	774.8	619.5
Marine Resources	1427.7	1168.8
Hunting	57.5	24.3
Deer Hunting	14.1	11.8
Trapping	4.9	3
Wildlife Mgt. Areas	925.1	1635.6
NG & Endangered Species	80	55.9
Court	36.9	18.1
Regional Meetings	0	118.7
Pollution Investigation	25.5	24.1
Training	208.7	1086.8
Other Law Enforcement	363.9	250.2
Administration	1565.7	1472.7

Fish Management	0	5.5
Wildlife Management	137.2	99.3
Information & Education	42.3	0
Bear Control	4.3	24.9
Bear Patrol and Investigation	7.5	8.6

During patrols, officers performed 5232 field inspections (7329 -2020) of hunters, fishermen or trappers and the resultant caseload is tabulated:

Law Enforcement Regions

	<u>North</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>Marine</u>	<u>Adm.</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>2020</u>
Summonses issued	59	37	122	92	0	310	588
Criminal Charges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warnings issued	4	2	0	42	0	48	73
Bear Feeding Warnings	0	0	0	0	0	0	4

Field Inspections by Region

Administration	0
Northern Region	986
Central Region	719
Southern Region	1296
Marine Region	2231
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,232</b>

Field Inspections by Activity:

Hunters	8
Freshwater Anglers	976
Trappers	0
Commercial Fishermen	54
Marine Rec. Anglers	2358
WMA non-hunting/fishing	1699
Other	137

Listed below are the types of summonses issued:

	<u>North</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>Marine</u>	<u>Adm.</u>
Fishing	22	7	6	0	0
Hunting	0	0	9	0	0
Waterfowl Hunting	0	0	0	0	0
Deer Hunting	1	0	0	0	0
Trapping	0	0	0	0	0
WMA	33	10	106	0	0
Striped Bass	0	0	0	0	0
Shellfish	0	10	0	25	0
Title 2C	0	0	0	0	0
Marine-Commercial	0	0	0	4	0
Marine-Recreational	0	5	0	60	0
Nongame & Exotic	0	0	0	0	0
Title 58	0	0	0	0	0
Title 39	0	1	0	0	0
Other	3	4	1	2	0
Bear Hunting	0	0	0	0	0
Bear Feeding	0	0	0	0	0
Marine Striped Bass	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>0</b>

Penalties collected during this report period by Conservation Police Officers: \$49,788.50

Call volume (reports of violations, general questions, requests for assistance, etc.) received at region offices:

North	* numbers not reported due to office closure
Central	406
South	122
Marine	218

**Total calls received: 746**

Bureau of Law Enforcement personnel status as of 7/20/21:

Administration - 7

1 Chief  
2 Deputy Chiefs  
1 CPO I - Admin  
2 CPO IIs – Training  
1 CPO III- Admin

Northern Region – 10

1 CPO I  
2 CPO IIs  
7 CPO IIIs

Central Region - 9

1 CPO I  
1 CPO II  
6 CPO IIIs  
1 Technical Assistant 2

Southern Region - 12

1 CPO I  
2 CPO IIs  
8 CPO IIIs  
1 Agency Services Rep

Marine Region - 15

1 CPO I  
2 CPO IIs  
11 CPO IIIs  
1 Agency Services Rep

**Total Employees: 53**

**Northern Region Highlights**

On Friday 07/02/2021, Lt. Sutton received a phone call from a concerned citizen advising that he had observed a vehicle parked at a fishing access late at night on 7/01/2021 and that the vehicle remained in the same location. He advised that the vehicle belonged to an elderly male that frequently fished the area, but he never stayed out late. Lt. Sutton responded and searched the area, ultimately locating the individual who was deceased. The subsequent investigation revealed that the individual had died of natural causes. CPO Della Vella, New Jersey State Park Police, National Park Service Rangers from the Delaware Water Gap and New Jersey State Police assisted with the investigation.

During the report period Northern Region CPOs assisted Wildlife Services staff with two separate coyote/human attacks in Randolph Township, Morris County. CPOs dispatched two coyotes, and both tested positive for rabies.

On Monday 07/05/2021, CPO Della Vella apprehended seven individuals that entered the restricted area of the Wildcat Ridge WMA. Seven summonses were issued for entering a restricted area of a WMA.

### Central Region Highlights

CPOs Carman, Bickerton, Mutone, Garofalo, Riviello and Lt. Mascio were busy patrolling CRO Wildlife Management Areas. A total of seventeen summonses were issued. Violations included entering a WMA after legal hours, build/maintain a fire, alcohol on a WMA, ATV on a WMA, operate a vehicle off the established road, enter a restricted area, and several title 39 violations.

CPO Bickerton responded to Lake Success at Colliers Mills WMA for a submerged motor vehicle. The driver was careless in operating the vehicle and neglected to put the vehicle into park. Luckily the driver was able to escape the vehicle before it entered the lake. Because the vehicle was completely submerged, a dive team from the Howell Fire Department- Squankum Fire Co. District 1, responded. Two divers entered the lake and were able to locate the truck approximately 25 yards offshore. The truck also had a plastic reserve tank of diesel fuel strapped in the bed, which was leaking into the lake. A Haz-Mat team placed absorbent pads and a boom on the water to remove as much of the deleterious substance as possible. The driver was issued several summonses.

CPO Carman provided a presentation at the Middletown Youth Police Academy. The presentation focused on the job duties of a conservation police officer and involved some field exercises. CPO Carman also conducted a CPR and first aid course for Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries.

CPOs Carman and Bickerton responded to a creek in Allentown, NJ for a report of a group harvesting freshwater shellfish. Four out of state individuals were apprehended with approximately 64,000 corbicula clams. The group indicated that the clams were being used to feed their turtles, but due to the large quantity of clams, it appeared these clams would be introduced into the food chain for human consumption. The clams were seized, and summonses were issued.

CPO McManus conducted a joint investigation with the Monmouth County SPCA. A resident of Highlands, NJ was video recorded destroying multiple swallow nests in a parking garage with a stick. The video captured the image of chicks falling onto the ground. Luckily all the chicks were recovered and transported to Mercer County Wildlife Rehab Center. Summonses are pending.

### Southern Region Highlights

CPO Fox received information that a Gloucester County hunter had shot three wild turkeys during a morning hunt. The officer reviewed the hunter's license and permit status and uncovered that the hunter did not have a permit for the hunting period in question. CPOs Fox, Kille and Lt. Batten arrived at the hunter's house to conduct an interview. At the residence, the officers observed male turkey feathers and blood in the bed of a pickup truck. The officers questioned the hunter regarding the evidence and the hunter admitted to shooting three turkeys and surrendered the evidence to the officers. Lt. Batten observed a small smear of what appeared to be dried blood on a concrete apron in the driveway. Upon further examination, the blood contained small hair like fibers consistent with the head feathers of a turkey. CPO Fox and Kille pressed the interview further and gained an admission from the hunter that he had harvested a fourth turkey the previous week. Multiple charges of taking

game in excess of the bag limit, hunting without a proper permit and possession of unregistered wild turkeys have been issued.

CPOs continue to enforce the mandated closures in three Wildlife Management Areas. During an evening patrol in White Oak WMA in Gloucester County, CPOs Vazquez and Kille observed several individuals who entered the restricted area by opening a gate and letting themselves into the WMA. The group set up a picnic area complete with alcohol, swimming, and fire. The CPO's identified the suspects who had no driver's licenses or registrations for the vehicles. Three motor vehicles were impounded by the officers and summons for entering the restricted area were issued.

Winslow PD, located in Camden County, called Trenton Dispatch to report a motor vehicle had been struck with a projectile while driving down a major highway. Lt. James responded to the call and met with the complainant who stated that while he was driving, he could hear gun shots and heard the bullets strike his vehicle. Winslow PD removed one .22 caliber projectile from the rear fender of the vehicle. Lt. James interviewed a farmer who lived adjacent to the highway who admitted to having shot at a deer that evening with a .22 caliber rifle. Lt. James seized the rifle as evidence. CPO Vazquez followed up with the investigation and interviewed the farmer who stated he was attempting to scare the deer from his crop field. The farm had a depredation permit the previous year but nothing valid at the time of this incident. Charges of careless discharge of a weapon, damage to property, illegal missiles and closed season have been issued to the accused.

District 6 CPOs have investigated several instances where individuals breached the gate blocking access to the Menantico Ponds WMA. Twelve summonses have been issued for illegally opening the gate and entering the restricted area.

### Marine Region Highlights

On June 26, 2021, CPOs Meyer and Capri conducted a vessel patrol around Barnegat Light identifying and inspecting vessels returning from tuna fishing. Two vessels were found in possession of undersized yellowfin tuna, which are required to have a minimum length of 27 inches. Additionally, one of the vessels in possession of undersized yellowfin tuna failed to possess a federal Highly Migratory Species (HMS) permit required to target and possess tuna. These cases were submitted to National Marine Fisheries Service NMFS for enforcement action.

On July 9, 2021, CPO Woerner inspected a vessel with four fishermen returning to the Atlantic Highlands Municipal Ramp. The fishermen proudly showed CPO Woerner several legal-sized summer flounder and black seabass. Suspicious, however, that they had retained more fish CPO Woerner performed a thorough inspection, which uncovered numerous sublegal-sized fish that were well hidden in additional coolers onboard. Six summonses were issued to the fishermen for multiple violations including overlimit and undersized summer flounder and black seabass.

CPO Szelc and Lt. Harp conducted a land-based patrol on Sunday, July 11, 2021, focusing on potential Sunday shellfish harvesting. The CPOs located two large groups of individuals actively harvesting clams from the condemned waters of Lakes Bay in Egg harbor Twp. After making observations and documenting which individuals were engaged in harvesting, the CPOs conducted an inspection and located several hundred clams. The inspection resulted in nine summonses issued for harvesting shellfish without a license, and warnings for harvesting shellfish from condemned waters. CPO Szelc

and Lt. Harp continued their patrol and issued an additional eight summonses for various other violations totaling seventeen summonses issued throughout coastal Atlantic County that day.

While patrolling Fortescue on a Sunday afternoon, CPO Sloan observed four individuals harvesting shellfish from a rockpile in condemned waters. Upon inspection, they were found to be in possession of several hundred oysters and mussels. None of the individuals had a shellfish license. All the shellfish were seized, and the harvesters were issued appropriate summonses and/or warnings.

To protect sea turtles, chain mats and turtle deflector dredges are required to be used May 1st through November 30th when commercial fishing for scallops west of 71 degrees longitude. Lt. Petruccelli found a commercial scallop vessel based out of Cape May in possession of a scallop dredge without the required turtle chain mat upon its return from a scallop fishing trip in the Mid-Atlantic sea scallop access area. The vessel operator initially made false statements proclaiming that the turtle chain mat had been ripped off the dredge on bottom structure while fishing. Further interview revealed that the operator did not utilize the chain mats on that trip and several previous trips. The case was referred to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for enforcement action.

During offshore patrols with the Bureau's P/V Integrity the last couple of months, CPOs documented numerous Federal and State violations. The violations include several cases of failure to mark / identify trap gear, two cases of failing to possess a highly migratory species (HMS) permit, possession of HMS in form other than specified by regulation, utilization of an otter trawl in state waters without an otter trawl license, utilization of an otter trawl within two miles of the coastline, unlawful commercial lobster traps inside a special management zone, and three cases of failing to report bluefin tuna within 24 hours of harvest. The Federal cases were referred to National Marine Fisheries Service for enforcement action and the appropriate summonses were issued for the State violations.