



## **BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

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

#### **HUNTER EDUCATION/ RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3)/NASP**

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

Twelve hunter education class sessions were held statewide during this reporting period with 148 students successfully completing the courses. Attendance rates are still running higher than previous years at over 80-percent. Hunter Education staff are currently working on scheduling classes for the months of July and August.

Staff responded to 30 duplicate Hunter Education requests with a total of 45 total duplicates processed (some applications contain requests for multiple disciplines). This number is down from previous years; however, it's anticipated that requests should significantly increase from this number in August and again by September/October.

Staff revised the duplicate hunter education card to include the most current information. All duplicates are now emailed to individuals, so they may retain a digital copy to eliminate repeat requests (unless a hard copy is specifically requested).

Staff processed seven rifle certifications during the report period. Rifle certifications are updated in the user's profile when they complete and send in their huntercourse.com voucher.

Staff submitted contact information to the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) in recognition of Jim Cox who was awarded the IHEA-USA 50 for 50 Award for Hunter Education

Instructors. He will be receiving a plaque, Yeti Rambler cup, and a My Medic First Aid Kit in recognition of his incredible dedication and commitment to New Jersey's Hunter Education Program.

Staff re-developed the new Hunter Education Instructor Training PowerPoint presentation to remain consistent with our most current approach to offering hunter education courses.

Staff trained two new hunter education instructors during this period.

Staff updated the community hunt presentation that is utilized at township deer management meetings. Updates and in-depth discussions on hunting safety procedures are part of the program.

Staff measured two New Jersey trophy white-tailed deer for an individual to determine if they reached the Boone & Crockett minimum for entry into the record books. The first buck gross-scored 154 2/8" and net-scored 146 6/8". The second gross-scored 150 6/8" and net-scored 143 3/8".

Staff attended an Architecture Schematic Design meeting for the Holly Farms office to determine the Bureau's plans and design options.

Staff reviewed the Division's website development content and provided comments on four freshwater fishing wireframes. The content covered topics such as: how to get started, freshwater fishing and fishing education. Text, layout, images, and overall design were also reviewed.

Staff provided edits to a *Welcome to New Jersey* article for the upcoming 2021-22 Hunting and Trapping Digest. The edits to the article will reflect our program confirmation message explaining how to purchase a hunting license which is sent to all students who complete the course.

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

Staff gave a presentation on the Apprentice License Survey to members of the Fish and Game Council during their July meeting. Accompanying documents were forwarded for posting on the Division's website.

Staff prepared, edited, and posted the third installment of the R3 Newsletter for July 2021 and distributed it via the Division website and several GovDelivery listserv groups.

Staff completed final edits of the R3 Mentor and Mentee applications, and posted them on the Division's R3 webpage to increase capacity for a structured mentor program.

Staff processed five R3 mentor applications during the report period. The program now boasts 68 mentors statewide, 41 of whom are registered as dog-handlers and mentors for the 2021 Take A Kid (TAK) Youth Pheasant Hunt. Staff continues to finalize a mentor training for dog handlers and volunteers for the TAK Youth Pheasant Hunt and other target shooting/hunting mentored events.

Staff organized and hosted an Introductory Trap Shoot at the Pine Valley Trap Club in Berlin, Camden County. The 12 registered participants received expert instruction from three of the club's mentors. Many of the participants had never shot before along with a few who had not taken a shot in more than five years! The event was well received by all who attended.

Staff scheduled an introductory trap shoot program at the Mallard Trap Club in Monroe Township, Middlesex County. Four mentors have been reserved to instruct participants on trap safety and shooting techniques.

Staff participated in a meeting with GIS staff regarding the Hunting and Trapping Explorer app. Currently, a script is being developed to serve as a tutorial for users.

Staff had a conference call with members of Ducks Unlimited, and staff from the Bureaus of Wildlife Management and Land Management to begin coordinating a dedication event at the Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area slated for early October.

#### **NASP® (Katie Paey)**

Three Basic Archery Instructor (BAI) trainings were scheduled for upcoming months.

Staff met with I&E supervisors to discuss the NASP program and how it will be administered in the future.

Assistance was provided to schools planning to order NASP equipment.

Assistance was provided to BAIs submitting their annually required NASP reports.

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

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

Weekend programs on bay fishing, clamming and salt marsh ecology continue to progress with open enrollment. Additional dates were added after all program slots had filled.

Eight high school students participated in a three-day program focused on field research techniques in the environmental science field.

Interns continue to work on independent research projects.

New holes have been forming around the bulkhead. Upon closer inspection, staff realized that the bulkhead is failing in multiple places along its length.

Grounds, facility, and equipment continue to be maintained by staff and volunteers.

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

A Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament (GSFT) meeting was attended. The date of May 15, 2022 was selected for the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Tournament. The committee will work to find a new head judge and request donations for raffle prizes. Jersey Coast Anglers Association (JCAA) is using Eventbrite, an online registration platform, for their fluke fishing tournament this year. Committee members are hoping to meet with JCAA members to see if this platform could work for online GSFT registrations. The next meeting is scheduled for September 20 at 7 p.m.

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

A formal request to develop an Angler R3 plan with assistance from the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation was submitted.

## **WEBSITE ACTIVITY (Doug Rizio)**

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

One (1) "News" page was posted this report period for a morbidity/mortality event in mid-Atlantic Songbirds.

Approximately fourteen (14) pages were revised/updated during the reporting period, including multiple updates to the Shell Recycling Program.

Eight (8) images were edited and posted, and two (2) were removed from the home page for the new season.

Approximately twenty-one (21) documents were edited in or converted to PDF format. These included: Council/Committee Documents (12 in one .zip file); Minutes/Agendas (4); Bureau Reports (11 in two .zip files), and six (6) others.

### **Analytics**

The number of hits on the homepage in June was 18,594; an average of 620 hits per day. It is a decrease from the 22,752 hits in June 2020.

The ten most visited pages in June were: Fishing License Information – 18,551; License Information – 12,727; Regulations – 6,961; Saltwater Fishing – 6,489; License Agents – 4,090; Hunting – 3,978; Hunter Education – 3,806; Marine Licenses – 3,759; and Bear Safety Tips – 3,753.

Other popular pages were: Fishing – 3,613; Freshwater Fishing – 3,320; Hunter Training Areas – 3,113; Hunting License Information – 3,091; Contact Us – 2,983; Wildlife Management Areas – 2,929; Bear Facts – 2,904; Fluke Information – 2,889; Deer – 2,553; and Finding Injured or Young Wildlife – 2,311.

The most requested PDFs this reporting period in descending order were: Snakes of New Jersey; Snake Identification; Wildlife Rehabilitators; Marine Regulations Summary; Snake ID at a Glance; Saltwater Fishing Guide; Crab Pot and Trot Line Regulations; Boat Ramp Guide; Freshwater Fishing Regulations Summary; and Wildlife Relocation Policy.

### **Additional Activities**

Additional activities included virtual meetings concerning migration to WordPress; weekly social media meetings; and Commissioner's Updates.

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

### ***Digest Production***

Production continues on the hunting Digest as the publisher creates Pass 3 for our review. A large volume of revisions to Pass 2 were processed — including numerous new layout and design requests. Completion target: late August.

### **Outstanding Deer Program**

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

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

A councilman from Allendale requested guidance and approval of a possible Eagle Scout project creating engineered fish habitat in a borough pond. Staff connected the councilman with our fisheries biologists.

### **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 Commissioner LaTourette's weekly broadcasts; continued reviewing, revising, comparing and verifying materials provided for the hunting Digest; participated in several hunting Digest status meetings with colleagues, including a full-day collaboration with 10 colleagues reviewing the document page-by-page. A request was relayed for I & E to stage a photo shoot of Law Enforcement CPOs at work for this Digest issue.

In addition, the second pass Digest revision document PDF was submitted to the publisher (including 12 new files) with a large volume of significant revisions to process (over 1,400 data points.) Staff cataloged wildlife (triplet fawns) and fishing (rainbow trout) photos submitted by an amateur hunter/angler/photographer. The HelpDesk provided assistance on a computer connectivity issue.

For development of the new website, staff provided comments and suggestions on the freshwater fish wireframes.

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

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

NOV Posting - Site Remediation and Waste Management Program (Research Scientist 2)  
NOV Posting - Office of Equal Opportunity and Public Contract Assistance (Investigator Trainee/Hourly)  
Reminder - Paul Tarlowe's Retirement  
NOV Posting - NHR (Analyst Trainee)  
NOV Posting - DFW (Wildlife Worker)  
Staff Information on Songbird Mortality (Drafted; unreleased)  
Teams Meeting for Paul Tarlowe 7/2 @ 2 p.m.  
Welcome New Staff Member Doug Rizio  
DFW Promotional Announcements (Senior Biologist; Tech. Asst. 2)  
2 NOV Postings - DFW, Watershed & Land Management (Agencies Services Rep Trainee; Manager 3)  
NOV Posting - Office of Permitting and Project Navigation (Env. Specialist 2)  
Donated Leave Posting  
June Bureau Reports  
NOV Posting - DFW (Program Specialist Trainee)  
Senior Wildlife Worker Lateral Posting – Hackettstown  
NOV Posting - Division of Budget and Financial Operations (Manager 2)  
NOV Posting - DFW (Research Scientist 2)

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

#### **Dog Days of Summer – July 2021**

**Also, during this reporting period:** the Bureau of Information and Education's Monthly Report for June was compiled and edited; Commissioner's Team Meetings were remotely attended; a Teams Meeting was attended on 7/2; work continues on the FY21 Annual Report (BWM and BLM submissions were edited); security awareness training was completed; in-office days were selected for August Pay Periods 1 & 2; the website's freshwater fishing wireframe was reviewed; and the employee IC list was revised to reflect additions/retirements.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Matt Hencheck)**

### **Video Production**

- *Shell Recycle Program* – staff filmed and produced two videos on the topic. The first followed NJDEP Commissioner Shawn LaTourette’s tour of the Nacote Creek Research Station as he spoke with staff and Scott Stueber, the program’s coordinator. This production highlighted work conducted by staff on location in the Mullica River with the Commissioner taking part. This video was posted to the NJDEP’s YouTube channel.
- *Shell Recycle Program II* – This video was a longer, more in-depth version about the program highlighting more of the work being conducted by Division staff as they show the process from beginning to end. The video was also posted to our social media platforms.

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

### **Facebook**

The DFW Facebook (FB) page had **40,589 followers** and **38,203 likes** at the end of this reporting period.

Twenty (**20**) 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: Bird of the Month, Sedge Summer Programs, National Go Fishing Day, deer with velvet, Wildlife Wednesdays, a morbidity/mortality event in songbirds, Go Fish Fridays, pump-out stations, a promo for hunter education, Independence Day, the R3 program, Shark Week, Shell Recycling Program, and theft of fence panels at the Tuckahoe WMA.

**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):

**6/24** – Morbidity/mortality event in songbirds - reached **151,041** people, **16,941** engagements

**7/14** – Theft of fence panels at Tuckahoe WMA - reached **46,394** people, **7,440** engagements

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

### **Instagram**

The DFW Instagram page had **10,416 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: Bird of the Month, Sedge Summer Programs, National Go Fishing Day, deer with velvet, Wildlife Wednesdays, morbidity/mortality event in songbirds, Go Fish Fridays, pump-out stations, hunter education promotion, Independence Day, Shark Week, Shell Recycling Program, and theft of fence panels at Tuckahoe WMA.

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

7/7 – Wildlife Wednesday turkey trail camera video - reached **8,032** people

7/14 – Theft of fence panels at Tuckahoe WMA - reached **6,183** people

Staff monitored and responded to comments and private messages.

### **Other Activities**

- Participated in weekly social media / GovDelivery Planning Meetings
- Edits were made to the draft Range Brochure and the final version was sent to Bureau of Land Management and Hunter Education staff.
- Attended a meeting with ENSP and Law Enforcement staff as well as conservation partners to discuss outreach efforts for an upcoming terrapin release.

**Content for Facebook and Instagram is continuously needed. *If you have ideas for a Social Media post, please contact 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)**

There are no program requests for the summer or fall.

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

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

The Pequest Exhibit Project continues to be managed by DEP Construction Management Specialist Ed Mulvan and his staff. Information is provided as needed. A meeting was held to answer further questions.

The roof and water line replacement projects continue.

Ground maintenance is ongoing. Picnic tables are being rebuilt.

Bathrooms at the education pond were cleaned in preparation for the HOFNOD groups that will be using them. During cleaning, staff found leaks around the skylights and the roof appears to need replacement.



## **Trout in the Classroom**

Registration for the 2021-22 school year has opened. Currently, 71 teachers plan on participating in the fall. Communication with teachers continues as needed.

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

Staff is working on a *Train the Trainer*-type program for angling education.

## **Mobile Education Trailer (MET)**

Nothing to announce this reporting period.

## **Other**

Work on the Record Fish Program continues.

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

Staff continues to work on a hybrid leadership training format. Scheduled for late summer, the training will consist of virtual content, online homework, and two in-person sessions. One session will take place on September 18 at the Pequest facility and focus on freshwater fishing. The other will be held on September 25 at Sedge Island and highlight saltwater fishing.

Staff exhibited and offered hands-on fishing programs at a special field day sponsored by the New Jersey School of Conservation in partnership with Stokes State Forest staff. Approximately 70 participants spent the day cycling through activities. HOFNOD fishing equipment was supplied to those interested in catch and release fishing at Lake Wapalanne with one visitor catching a 12-inch largemouth bass!

Staff hosted the Belvidere-based HOFNOD group Keepin' It REEL at the Pequest Trout Hatchery Pond on July 11. In total, 17 youth accompanied by their parents fished the education pond with five trout harvested. An anatomy lesson was also given while fileting the fish for participants to take home for a meal.

HOFNOD teams continue to plan for the fall with in-person meetings and upcoming charter fishing events.

Staff will be attending *Green Day* at the Sussex County Fair on August 9 to exhibit and promote the program.

Currently, staff is reprinting the Freshwater and Saltwater Beginner Guides to Fishing.

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

### **Black Bear Education Program**

During this reporting period, a Black Bear Communications Strategy was drafted should funding become available to further our outreach efforts. Some considerations include developing a multi-media black bear safety campaign with a marketing firm, redesigning black bear content on the website, developing online activities for educators, and funding *BearWise* Communities.

Copies of the bear safety literature were mailed to the public upon request. The Tyvek Bear Safety Sign was updated, and 6,500 copies are being reprinted for distribution to managers of state, federal, county, municipal and private properties upon request for posting at trailheads and kiosks. The signs contain information on bears and Q-R code links to the Division's website.

A social media message was posted to educate the public on bear safety. The Division partnered with DEP's Office of Local Government Assistance to email municipal leaders statewide about steps they can take to promote black bear safety for residents in their communities.

### **Division Website Development**

Website development meetings were coordinated and attended to review the following topics for the new Division website: marine fisheries and hunting narratives, freshwater fishing wireframes, and marine content. Upon review, feedback was provided to the website developers. In addition, content development has begun for the Bureau of Law Enforcement's narratives.

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

A meeting was scheduled to finalize aspects of the Wildlife Habitat Supporter Donation program with a state contract vendor who will develop a multi-media promotional marketing campaign.

### **Outreach Group**

Requests were submitted by Division staff via the Outreach Group Project Request form and were distributed to employees who can offer assistance with videography, photography, and drone work.

A meeting was attended to discuss the Division's NASP program.