



NJDEP Fish and Wildlife
Monthly Highlights
Bureau of Law Enforcement
July 21, 2024 to August 20, 2024

Frank Panico, Chief
Douglas Applegate, Deputy Chief
Joseph Soell, Captain - Administration
Robert Driscoll, Lieutenant - Training

Northern Region (908) 735-8240
Joseph Kuechler, Captain
Jordan Holmes, Lieutenant (District 1)
Brice Paey, Lieutenant (District 2)
Hannah Koch, Agency Services Representative

Central Region (609) 259-2120
Linda Quirk, Captain
Andrew Riviello, Lieutenant (District 3)
Sean McManus, Lieutenant (District 4)
Mike Anselmo, Agency Services Representative

Southern Region (856) 629-0555
Paul Toppin, Captain
Zane Batten, Lieutenant (District 5)
Craig James, Lieutenant (District 6)
Sue Canale, Agency Services Representative

Marine Region (609) 748-2050
Brian Scott, Captain
Chris Moscatiello, Lieutenant (District 7)
Ryan Harp, Lieutenant (District 8)
Chris Petrucci, Lieutenant (District 9)
Noreen White, Agency Services Representative

Conservation Officers report a total of 6,685.5 hours of duty (7,132.1 - 2023)
These hours are charged to the following categories of duty:

	2024	2023
Law Enforcement	4,984.9	4,891.0
Fishing	1,618.8	1,210.1
Marine Resources	1,339.7	1,313.4
Hunting	48.0	29.1
Deer Hunting	36.7	19.4
Trapping	16.6	13.2
Wildlife Mgt. Areas	577.2	502.8
NG & Endangered Species	61.2	195.7
Court	36.1	59.1
Regional Meetings	0.0	0.0
Pollution Investigation	22.4	44.0
Training	792.6	1,479.6
Other Law Enforcement	1,041.3	600.8
Administration	1,452.8	1,883.8
Fish Management	4.1	2.0

Wildlife Management	74.3	70.5
Information & Education	99.2	116.5
Bear Control	19.2	14.5
Bear Patrol & Invest	44.9	22.1

During patrols, officers performed 2658 field inspections (4280 - 2023) 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>Admin</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>2023</u>
Summonses Issued	114	26	69	81	0	290	280
Criminal Arrests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warnings Issued	7	0	0	22	0	29	47
Bear Feeding Warns Issued	2	0	0	0	0	2	0

Field Inspections By Region

Administration	0
Northern Region	526
Central Region	315
Southern Region	539
Marine Region	1278
Total	2658

Field Inspections By Activity

Hunters	1
Freshwater Anglers	715
Trappers	0
Commercial Fishermen	47
Marine Rec. Anglers	1032
WMA non hunt/fish	505
Other	27

Listed below are the types of summonses issued:

	<u>North</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>Marine</u>	<u>Admin</u>
Fishing	82	11	12	0	0
Hunting	2	0	0	0	0
Waterfowl Hunting	0	0	0	0	0
Deer Hunting	0	0	0	0	0
Trapping	0	0	0	0	0
WMA	8	5	54	0	0
Striped Bass	7	0	0	0	0
Shellfish	2	0	0	16	0
Marine-Commercial	0	0	0	2	0
Marine-Recreational	8	1	2	63	0
Nongame & Exotic	0	0	0	0	0
Title 58	0	0	0	0	0
Title 39	0	7	0	0	0
Other	5	2	1	0	0
Bear Hunting	0	0	0	0	0
Bear Feeding	0	0	0	0	0
Marine Striped Bass	0	0	0	0	0
Title 2C	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	114	26	69	81	0



Penalties collected during this report period by Conservation Police Officers: \$13,158

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

North	151
Central	122
South	277
Marine	200
Total Calls Received	750

Bureau of Law Enforcement personnel status as of Aug 20, 2024

Administration - 8

- 1 Chief
- 2 Deputy Chiefs
- 1 CPO II Training
- 2 CPO I Training
- 1 CPO III Admin
- 0 CPO II Admin
- 1 CPO I Admin

Northern Region - 12

- 1 CPO III
- 2 CPO II
- 8 CPO I
- 1 ASR

Central Region - 10

- 1 CPO III
- 2 CPO II
- 7 CPO I

Southern Region - 12

- 1 CPO III
- 2 CPO II
- 8 CPO I
- 1 ASR

Marine Region - 14

- 1 CPO III
- 3 CPO II
- 9 CPO I
- 1 ASR

Special Investigations Unit - 3

- 1 CPO III
- 1 CPO II
- 1 CPO I

Total Employees: 59

Northern Region Highlights

Northern Region officers represented NJ Fish and Wildlife at the Warren County Farm Fair from July 27 to August 3. The mobile education trailer served as the backdrop for the officers and biologists from the Bureau of Wildlife Management's deer project to meet with fairgoers and answer questions on a wide range of wildlife topics. The patrol UTV was also on display and hundreds of families were able to ask questions and learn about Conservation Law Enforcement.

During the month of July CPOs in the Northern Region conducted several freshwater fishing patrols with a focus on bass fishing enforcement. CPOs were able to locate individuals in possession of a total of 25 undersize largemouth and smallmouth bass. Summonses were issued for possession of undersize largemouth/smallmouth bass.

While on patrol in Hudson County, CPOs Jordan Parham and Allen Sutton encountered multiple groups who were crabbing within the Newark Bay Complex. Over the course of three weeks, CPOs Parham and A. Sutton have collectively written fifteen summonses for illegal crabbing in the Newark



Bay Complex. On one occasion, an individual attempted to dump their crabs as CPOs Parham and A. Sutton initiated an inspection. CPO A. Sutton prevented the individual from dumping the crabs and CPO Parham issued the individual an additional summons for interfering with the duties of a Conservation Police Officer.

While on Patrol in Hudson County, CPO Jordan Parham, encountered two individuals who were fishing within the Newark Bay Complex. CPO Parham found the two individuals to be in possession of nine undersized striped bass. CPO Parham issued the two individuals a total of nine summonses for the possession of undersized striped bass and over the daily bag limit for striped bass.

On July 22, 2024, CPOs Jack Sikora and Shawn Coiro were patrolling the Raritan River in Branchburg Township, Somerset County. CPOs observed two vehicles parked in an area known for fishing activity. The doors of the vehicle were open and multiple individuals were seated inside. An orange five-gallon bucket with a lid was observed on the ground in front of one of the vehicles. Due to the brightness of the sun, CPOs J. Sikora and Coiro were able to observe the outlines of fish within the bucket. CPOs J. Sikora and Coiro spoke to the occupants of the vehicles which advised they had utilized multiple cast nets to catch a large quantity of fish. CPOs recovered three cast nets within the trunk of the vehicle. CPO J. Sikora spoke with the five individuals who all claimed they utilized the cast net to catch fish. A total of 100 fish were concealed inside the bucket consisting of 11 undersize smallmouth bass, 65 sunfish, and 24 sucker fish. A total of 15 summonses were issued for the incident, consisting of fishing without a valid 2024 fishing license, using an illegal net in freshwater, and possession of underside smallmouth bass.

CPO Shawn Coiro has been conducting multiple patrols of the Pequest Wildlife Management Area to thwart a recent influx of illegal dumping. On July 23, 2024, CPO Coiro investigated a vehicle that had been seen dumping debris numerous times throughout the last couple of months on the WMA. After further investigation, CPO Coiro located the individual and issued multiple summons for dumping refuse on a state wildlife management area.

On Monday, July 29th, 2024, at 2055 hours, a call was received from Trenton Dispatch regarding a missing person in the Berkshire Valley Wildlife Management Area. Mount Arlington Police and the Morris County Sheriff's Office were on scene and requesting assistance locating an individual described as having severe diabetic symptoms that frequently goes into diabetic shock. The individual had been missing approximately 30 hours after leaving his residence on an ATV on Sunday, July 28th, 2024, at approximately 1500 hours. CPO Allen Sutton, CPO Cowan Sikora and CPO Shawn Coiro arrived to assist in the search for the missing person. After several hours of searching in the dark, the missing individual was found and was in and out of consciousness. The individual was loaded into our UTV and transported to the roadway and monitored by EMTs until he could be transported via helicopter to the Morristown Medical Center. Without the quick action by our CPOs, this individual may not have been found and transported out of the woods for medical care.

Central Region Highlights

Lt. McManus assisted the state in reaching a pre-trial intervention agreement with an individual who purposely and knowingly violated NJSA 23:2A-6 by possessing an alligator without a potentially dangerous exotic animal permit, a third-degree crime. In the agreement, the individual was ordered to pay a penalty of \$5000 and to never possess a potentially dangerous species in the state again.

The Bureau of Law Enforcement participated in the DEP's Youth Inclusion Initiative (YII) during the months of July and August. Captain Quirk, with the assistance of Lt. Riviello and CPOs Tracy Stites, Alison Sloan, Allyson Rooke, and Shawn Coiro met with youth from eight community organizations to explain the role of Conservation Police Officers in wildlife conservation and the steps to attaining a career with the Bureau of Law Enforcement. With help from staff with the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries as role-players, the YII participants then tried out their investigative skills helping to solve a mock solid waste dumping complaint and apprehending a snake poacher in the act.

On August 10th, Central Region Officers worked a joint patrol focusing on illegal afterhours activities at Greenwood Forest WMA, Colliers Mills WMA and Assunpink WMA. In the Pole Brook section of Colliers Mills officers encountered ATV and dirt bike riders and a group at a bonfire party. Appropriate summonses were issued to all individuals. At the Assunpink WMA boat ramp, where there have been ongoing issues with illegal afterhours activity, the officers deployed the Bureau's lighted sign board. The sign board appeared to have the desired effect on this evening, because no violations were encountered in the parking area during its use.





CPO Kuri and Captain Quirk attended the National Night Out Event at Allaire State Park on Tuesday August 13th. CPOs Garofalo and Kuri attended the Willingboro Junior Police Academy. CPO Bickerton attended the North Brunswick Junior Police Academy.

On August 21st, William D. Wowkanyn, 32, of Brick was convicted of dumping on Manasquan River Wildlife Management Area. Over the course of several weeks in the winter of 2022-2023 approximately 60 tires were dumped in the WMA. CPO Michael Bickerton led the investigation that determined Wowkanyn was responsible. In a plea agreement before the Municipal Court of Brick, Wowkanyn pled guilty to one charge of dumping refuse on a wildlife management area. He was assessed a \$1500 penalty and \$4889.12 in restitution to NJ Fish and Wildlife for cleanup costs.

Southern Region Highlights

CPO Vazquez investigated a Franklin Township, Gloucester County resident who allegedly shot a deer. The suspect was confronted and interviewed in the same location where the deer was harvested. Biological evidence at the residence was observed and a confession from the homeowner was obtained. The homeowner stated the deer was inside his farm fence and he decided to shoot the deer. The individual was issued a summons for harvesting a deer in a closed season.

Marine Region Highlights

CPO Szelc was conducting surveillance of shoreside anglers along the jetties in Atlantic City where he observed two fishermen hiding what appeared to be small tautog in the rocks. One of the anglers retrieved a bucket from the rocks and took it to a vehicle parked nearby. The individual entered the driver's seat and started the vehicle. Moments later the second individual quickly ran to the waiting vehicle with a much larger, heavy bucket. CPO Szelc apprehended both individuals at the vehicle and found the first bucket only contained a small number of undersized tautog, however, the second bucket was nearly full. In total the two individuals were in possession of twenty-three undersized tautog, two undersized black seabass, and one undersized summer flounder. A total of eight summonses were issued for the multiple violations.

CPO Szelc responded to a complaint involving a group of individuals keeping undersized summer flounder beneath the Brigantine Bridge. CPO Szelc located the group and observed them utilizing nets to catch baitfish. Upon inspection, CPO Szelc found one undersized summer flounder among the baitfish. Through the course of the inspection, CPO Szelc located a cooler belonging to the group and found nine additional undersized summer flounder and one undersized black sea bass inside. Summons were issued to the responsible individuals.

During a patrol on board the Bureau's patrol vessel Integrity, CPOs Tomlin, Woerner and Lt. Petrucci observed four men on a small recreational fishing vessel engaged in shark fishing activity. After only a few minutes, CPOs observed one of the men gaff and boat a sandbar shark, which is a prohibited species. CPOs conducted an at-sea boarding of the vessel and found over 20 undersize and over the limit black sea bass. The individuals were charged Federally for the prohibited species and issued state summonses for the black sea bass violations. These same individuals were charged with multiple marine fishing violations in the past. During the same patrol, CPOs found multiple lobster pot trawls from three separate commercial fisherman inside the area of the Axel Carlson Reef site closed to lobster and fish trap use. The fishermen were issued summonses for state artificial reef site violations.



During a patrol to ensure compliance with safe and sanitary handling practices amongst the shellfish industry, Lt. Petruccelli found oyster aquaculture farmers with violations including failing to meet vibrio control plan time to temperature control requirements for harvesting oysters and failure to adhere to special conditions of the aquaculture permit. The farmers were issued the appropriate summonses.

CPOs Tomlin and Raker conducted night patrols in areas where shoreside shark fishing has gained tremendous popularity. During these patrols, CPOs issued multiple summonses for mishandling state and federally prohibited species of sharks. Dozens of anglers were also educated on identification of prohibited shark species and proper release techniques to ensure their survival.