



**NJDEP Fish and Wildlife
Monthly Highlights
Bureau of Law Enforcement
May 21, 2023 to June 20, 2023**

Frank Panico, Chief
Jason Snellbaker, Deputy Chief
Douglas Applegate, Deputy Chief
Robert Driscoll, Lieutenant - Training
Alison Sloan, Training
Linda Quirk, Captain - Administration
Joseph Soell, Lieutenant - Administration
Tyler Hausamann, Administration

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

Central Region (609) 259-2120
Shannon Martiak, Captain
Vacant, Lieutenant (District 3)
Sean McManus, Lieutenant (District 4)
Shari Irick, Technical Assistant 2

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 6,794.7 hours of duty (6,545.8 - 2022)
These hours are charged to the following categories of duty:

| | 2023 | 2022 |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Law Enforcement | 4,661.5 | 4,711.0 |
| Fishing | 1,690.6 | 1,339.0 |
| Marine Resources | 1,382.8 | 1,472.9 |
| Hunting | 56.1 | 86.8 |
| Deer Hunting | 10.5 | 6.5 |
| Trapping | 0.0 | 5.0 |
| Wildlife Mgt. Areas | 653.2 | 693.2 |
| NG & Endangered Species | 186.2 | 137.0 |
| Court | 51.4 | 52.0 |
| Regional Meetings | 69.4 | 46.4 |
| Pollution Investigation | 27.3 | 30.1 |
| Training | 636.0 | 708.9 |
| Other Law Enforcement | 543.0 | 649.7 |

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|
| Administration | 1,765.4 | 1,539.9 |
| Fish Management | 6.0 | 2.0 |
| Wildlife Management | 81.0 | 63.3 |
| Information & Education | 151.5 | 35.3 |
| Bear Control | 2.0 | 13.6 |
| Bear Patrol & Invest | 7.5 | 23.6 |

During patrols, officers performed 5459 field inspections (4984 - 2022) 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>2022</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Summonses Issued | 63 | 85 | 45 | 84 | 0 | 277 | 298 |
| Criminal Arrests | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Warnings Issued | 2 | 1 | 1 | 18 | 0 | 22 | 17 |
| Bear Feeding Warns Issued | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Field Inspections By Region

| | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Administration | 0 |
| Northern Region | 620 |
| Central Region | 864 |
| Southern Region | 1113 |
| Marine Region | 2862 |
| Total | 5459 |

Field Inspections By Activity

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Hunters | 9 |
| Freshwater Anglers | 1373 |
| Trappers | 0 |
| Commercial Fishermen | 61 |
| Marine Rec. Anglers | 2626 |
| WMA non hunt/fish | 761 |
| Other | 112 |

Listed below are the types of summonses issued:

| | <u>North</u> | <u>Central</u> | <u>South</u> | <u>Marine</u> | <u>Admin</u> |
|---------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Fishing | 57 | 6 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Hunting | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Waterfowl Hunting | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Deer Hunting | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Trapping | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| WMA | 2 | 69 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Striped Bass | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Shellfish | 0 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 0 |
| Marine-Commercial | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Marine-Recreational | 0 | 0 | 12 | 72 | 0 |
| Nongame & Exotic | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Title 58 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Title 39 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 0 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 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 | 63 | 85 | 45 | 84 | 0 |

Penalties collected during this report period by Conservation Police Officers: \$14862.00

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

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| North | 143 |
| Central | 203 |
| South | 176 |
| Marine | 129 |
| Total Calls Received | 651 |

Bureau of Law Enforcement personnel status as of Jun 20, 2023

Administration - 8

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

Northern Region - 9

1 CPO III
1 CPO II
6 CPO I
1 ASR

Central Region - 8

1 CPO III
1 CPO II
5 CPO I
1 TA 2

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 - 2

1 CPO III
1 CPO II

Total Employees: 53

Northern Region Highlights

On Sunday, June 18, 2023, while patrolling the Delaware River in Hardwick Township, Warren County, CPO Adam Merritt, and CPO Recruit Jack Sikora observed four individuals wearing dive masks actively spear fishing. CPOs set up surveillance and watched the individuals as they fished. Upon inspection, it was determined that the individuals were fishing with homemade mechanically propelled spears and did not possess valid 2023 fishing licenses. The four individuals were issued summonses for fishing without a valid license and using mechanically propelled spears.

On June 11, 2023, CPO Della Vella responded to Hawthorne Boro, Passaic County, to assist Hawthorne Boro Police with an illegally killed deer. On arrival, a deceased white-tailed deer was discovered behind the caller's residence with two arrows in it, just behind the rib cage. A patrol of the area resulted in the discovery of four additional arrows, leading officers towards a neighboring house.

The investigation determined that the neighbor shot the deer with a CO2 powered air bow. The appropriate summonses were issued for the incident.

Central Region Highlights

Lt. McManus received notification from Jackson PD that there was a large-scale party being advertised on social media sites that would be occurring on Colliers Mills WMA, Jackson Twp. On short notice, Central Region officers were able to mobilize and respond to the location early enough to intercept the party goers. A total of 20 summonses were issued and the party was disbanded prior to any damage to the WMA.

On a weekend evening, CRO officers conducted patrols of various WMA properties in Ocean and Monmouth Counties. This patrol was in direct response to the illegal parties and lewd behavior complaints that were being received. Officers worked into the early morning hours and issued a total of 45 summonses. Multiple parties were broken up and the operation proved to be successful.

Two summer interns, Sarah Grimm and Hannah Orloff recently completed their 5-week career development program with the Conservation Police. The interns were introduced to the various duties and responsibilities associated with being a conservation police officer. This included boat patrols, outreach programs, solid waste investigations, and WMA patrols. In addition, the interns received firsthand experiences with tagging bears, learning about native snakes and turtles, and electrofishing. We look forward to continuing this program.

In Colliers Mills WMA, Jackson Twp., CPO Bickerton discovered a pile of recently discarded residential waste that appeared to be associated with someone cleaning out a house. Following an investigation, a resident in Middletown Twp was charged with the illegal dumping.

Southern Region Highlights

Officer Vazquez and Lieutenant Batten conducted several boat patrols in Cumberland County inclusive of Union Lake and the Maurice River system south of Union Lake. Officers inspected a wide variety of sportsmen and women with the main violation observed being fishing without proper licenses. Officer Vazquez issued twelve violations between the two water bodies addressing the no license issue.

Officer Kille initiated an investigation of vandalism to state property when he observed a gate was broken into on Cedar Lake Wildlife Management Area located in Gloucester County. Cedar Lake WMA is a restricted area with a locked gate at its entrance. The officers reviewed surveillance footage and identified a suspect. The investigation resulted in the issuance of summonses to this suspect for breaking the lock from the gate to gain entry, entering a restricted area and operating an ATV in a Wildlife Management Area.

CPO's Fox and Chillari were patrolling Downe Twp, Cumberland County and observed a vehicle parked at a trailhead leading to a saltwater creek. The CPO's figured striped bass were likely being caught and set up surveillance. Three fishermen were observed walking out, but minutes later only one returned to the vehicle. The CPO's questioned the individual who said his fish were with his friends and they stopped down the trail to wash off their boots. He said they had caught white perch. The officers approached the other two fishermen who had a cooler containing the perch. A quick search of the woods where the fishermen were located revealed a trash bag hidden behind a tree containing 8 undersized stripers. The appropriate summonses were issued.

Marine Region Highlights

On the early evening of May 22nd, CPO Bahrle conducted an inspection of a recreational fishing vessel returning to a local boat ramp. The four fishermen on board the vessel told the CPO that they had kept 30 to 40 black sea bass. CPO Bahrle boarded the vessel and quickly realized the fishermen had over their limit of black sea bass as well as numerous undersized fish. CPO Bahrle counted the fish and found that the vessel had 65 black sea bass which made them 25 black sea bass over the limit. Of the 65 black sea bass 51 were under the legal-size limit of 12.5 inches. One tautog was also located on the vessel which was possessed during the closed season. A total of nine summonses were issued to the fishermen for the possession of undersized and over limit black sea bass and the possession of a closed season tautog.

On June 12th, CPO Bahrle located a group of four clammers off Maclearie Park in Belmar. CPO Bahrle issued summonses to the clammers for not possessing shellfish licenses and educated them with a written warning on the dangers of eating shellfish from the restricted waters of Shark River. After clearing the area CPO Bahrle received a complaint from dispatch that a Belmar police officer located another group of clammers in the same location. CPO Bahrle set up and made observations on the group of clammers to confirm their harvest activities. During his observations, he noticed one of the individuals was a clammer that he just issued a summons to. CPO Bahrle apprehended this group and issued a summons for not obtaining shellfish licenses and written warnings for harvesting shellfish from the restricted waters of the Shark River. The individual that was caught for the second time, received another summons for not having a shellfish license and a summons for harvesting from the restricted waters of the Shark River which is a petty disorderly person's offense with a maximum fine of \$500 and up to 30 days in jail.

On June 17th, CPO's Woerner and Bahrle along with Lt. Moscatiello conducted an inspection of a party boat. During the inspection it was determined the vessel was fishing in federal waters. The vessel did not have the required federal permits that would allow them to be compliant in federal waters. It was also determined the vessel was filleting black sea bass at sea and discarding the racks from the filleted fish. Summonses were issued to the vessel's owner and operator for violating the conditions of the fillet permit. The fishing in federal waters without the required permits was referred to the National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Law Enforcement for enforcement action.

Multiple marine CPO's participated in conducting fixed gear and fishing inspections on the Bureau's patrol vessel Integrity. Several recreational and commercial lobster pot violations were found on the Axel Carlson Reef site including several single lobster pots and lobster pot trawls that were found deployed in the closed area. Other gear violations found were failure to properly mark gear with identification and failure to notify the Division prior to the deployment of pots in the 'all access zone'. During these patrols, one vessel was inspected offshore and found to be fishing for tuna while engaged in a tuna tournament without a valid Federal highly migratory species permit. Appropriate enforcement action was taken for all cases.

On June 4th, CPO Klitz was conducting a patrol in Barnegat Light, monitoring fishing activity on the inlet jetty. CPO Klitz made observations of two individuals leaving the area with heavy re-usable shopping bags and fishing equipment. Upon inspection, the two bags were found to contain 67 tautog for which the season is currently closed. All the tautog were under the 15-inch size limit and ranged from 6 inches to 14 inches. Summonses were issued to the two individuals, and they face penalties in excess of \$13,000.00.