



NJDEP Fish and Wildlife
Monthly Highlights
Bureau of Law Enforcement
January 21, 2023 to February 20, 2023

Frank Panico, Chief
Jason Snellbaker, Deputy Chief
Douglas Applegate, Deputy Chief
Thomas O'Rourke, Lieutenant - Training
Robert Driscoll, Training
Linda Quirk, Captain - Administration
Joseph Soell, Lieutenant - Administration
Tyler Hausamann, Administration

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

Central Region (609) 259-2120
Shannon Martiak, Captain
Bryan Mascio, 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
Vacant, Lieutenant (District 7)
Ryan Harp, Lieutenant (District 8)
Chris Petrucci, Lieutenant (District 9)
Noreen White, Agency Services Representative

Conservation Officers report a total of 6,713.0 hours of duty (6,945.1 - 2022)
These hours are charged to the following categories of duty:

	2023	2022
Law Enforcement	4,697.6	4,775.5
Fishing	894.2	1,108.9
Marine Resources	1,364.4	1,408.8
Hunting	345.3	469.8
Deer Hunting	594.2	818.3
Trapping	150.4	188.0
Wildlife Mgt. Areas	461.1	408.4
NG & Endangered Species	193.0	39.9
Court	43.8	43.5
Regional Meetings	118.8	9.9
Pollution Investigation	90.2	45.0
Training	810.1	320.9
Other Law Enforcement	385.4	710.2

Administration	2,026.6	1,935.5
Fish Management	10.7	0.0
Wildlife Management	43.3	67.8
Information & Education	3.0	14.5
Bear Control	1.0	2.4
Bear Patrol & Invest	1.0	2.4

During patrols, officers performed 1501 field inspections (1703 - 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	40	40	15	10	0	105	208
Criminal Arrests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warnings Issued	3	0	1	7	0	11	56
Bear Feeding Warns Issued	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

Field Inspections By Region

Administration	0
Northern Region	179
Central Region	381
Southern Region	416
Marine Region	525
Total	1501

Field Inspections By Activity

Hunters	636
Freshwater Anglers	159
Trappers	21
Commercial Fishermen	66
Marine Rec. Anglers	207
WMA non hunt/fish	245
Other	31

Listed below are the types of summonses issued:

	<u>North</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>Marine</u>	<u>Admin</u>
Fishing	5	3	0	0	0
Hunting	0	7	2	1	0
Waterfowl Hunting	0	0	3	0	0
Deer Hunting	30	5	3	0	0
Trapping	1	0	0	0	0
WMA	4	21	7	0	0
Striped Bass	0	0	0	0	0
Shellfish	0	0	0	2	0
Marine-Commercial	0	0	0	0	0
Marine-Recreational	0	0	0	7	0
Nongame & Exotic	0	0	0	0	0
Title 58	0	0	0	0	0
Title 39	0	1	0	0	0
Other	0	3	0	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	40	40	15	10	0

Penalties collected during this report period by Conservation Police Officers: \$17,464.00

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

North	150
Central	251
South	186
Marine	79
Total Calls Recieved	666

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

Administration - 8

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

Northern Region - 10

1 CO III
2 CO II
6 CO I
1 ASR

Central Region - 9

1 CO III
2 CO II
5 CO I
1 TA 2

Southern Region - 12

1 CO III
2 CO II
8 CO I
1 ASR

Marine Region - 15

1 CO III
2 CO II
11 CO I
1 ASR

Total Employees: 54

Northern Region Highlights

On February 4, 2023, Northern and Central Region Officers attended utility task vehicle (UTV) training at the Pequest Wildlife Management Area. While performing the practical section of the training, three (3) hunters were observed conducting a deer drive near the officers. Two (2) of the hunters were found to be in possession of loaded shotguns within the safety zone of a hatchery building. Upon inspection, Lieutenant Holmes found one (1) of the hunters to be in possession of shotgun slugs without having the appropriate sights on his firearm. CPO Paey inspected the third hunter who possessed a resident New Jersey hunting license. CPO Paey determined that the hunter was a resident of Pennsylvania and had wrongfully procured resident New Jersey hunting licenses. Summonses were issued for possessing a loaded firearm within 450 feet of an occupied building while hunting, possessing shotgun slugs without proper sights, and wrongful procurement of a resident hunting license.

On February 12, 2023, CPO Hausamann received information regarding two (2) individuals keeping short walleye on the Delaware River near the Kittatinny boat ramp, in Hardwick Township, Warren County. CPO Hausamann forwarded the information to CPO Merritt and CPO Della Vella, who responded to the area and set up surveillance on the fishermen. CPO Merritt observed the fishermen catch four (4) walleye, all of which were not measured and stowed on a stringer. Upon inspection, it was determined that the two (2) fishermen possessed eleven (11) undersize walleyes and were five (5) walleyes over their daily creel limit. Appropriate summonses were issued.

In October of 2022, CPO Paey received information about an individual that may have been falsely registering small bucks as does as to not utilize their buck stub and continue to hunt for a larger buck. CPO Paey was able to verify that the individual had already harvested one small buck and registered it as a doe. CPO Paey began to monitor the individual's activity and was able to determine that the hunter again harvested another small buck and falsely registered it as a doe. After falsely registering two small bucks as does, the individual did not harvest another antlered deer during 2022. On Saturday, January 21, 2023, CPO Paey was notified that the individual had harvested a doe. CPO Paey was aware of where the individual would be bringing the deer after removing it from the field. CPO Paey responded to the location and met with the individual. An inspection of the antlerless deer showed it not to have a transportation tag affixed and the individual was not in possession of any of their harvest reports. CPO Paey informed the individual that he was aware of multiple discrepancies with the reported sex of the deer he harvested, and the actual sex of the deer he harvested. The individual immediately admitted that he had killed one small buck and registered it as a doe. The individual stated multiple times that he was embarrassed and that he was greedy because he wanted to harvest a bigger antlered deer. CPO Paey informed the individual that he was also aware of an additional buck that they had registered as a doe. The individual then admitted to falsely registering another small buck as a doe because they were greedy. As a result of the investigation, the individual was issued 8 summonses for failing to properly fill harvest report as required, falsely registering a deer, failing to properly fill harvest report as required, falsely registering a deer, taking over the limit antlered deer during fall bow, harvesting antlered deer with less than 3 points on one side in a QDM zone, transporting a deer without a proper transportation tag, and failing to fill harvest report as required.

On January 24, 2023, CPO Paey received a complaint of potential illegal hunting from the Raritan Township Police Department. CPO Paey responded and met with a Raritan Township Police officer who had located two dead deer at the rear of a property. Both deer had been shot and were starting early stages of decomposition. Neither deer carcass had any edible meat removed from it. The homeowner stated that he had gone hunting with a friend as an observer, and they did not bring the deer to a butcher. CPO Paey spoke to the friend via telephone who stated that they had harvested the two deer and they believed the deer were sick with "CWD" and that was the reason for them not being processed. Neither deer had any signs of being overtly sick. The individual stated that he had harvested a total of four deer over a two-day period, and that two were at a butcher, and the other two were in his friend's backyard. CPO Paey determined that the two deer that were decomposing had not been properly registered. On Wednesday, January 25, 2023, CPO Paey was contacted by the Raritan Township Police Department, who had been called to an additional deer carcass which had been located on the same property, and that a partially butchered deer had been located in close proximity to the residence with the 3 rotting carcasses. On Sunday, January 29, 2023, CPO Paey met with the individual. CPO Paey was able to determine that the individual had in fact shot a total of 6 deer between Friday, January 20, and Saturday, January 21. All six deer were shot behind the friend's residence. The first two deer were brought to a

butcher and the individual and homeowner planned to butcher the additional four deer. The individual stated that all the deer were healthy and that he and the homeowner only butchered one deer and dumped the carcass along the side of the road. The individual stated that he did not use the meat from the 3 deer behind the residence because they "didn't want to cut six deer." CPO Paey also determined that the two deer that had been brought to the butcher had been falsely registered for a different zone. As a result of the investigation, the individual was issued 10 summonses for 6 counts of failing to properly register a deer as required, 3 counts of leaving edible portions of deer meat to waste, and 1 count of interfering with the duties of a Conservation Police Officer.

Central Region Highlights

CPO Riviello received a complaint from a deer hunter that he had one of his trail cameras stolen that was set up in Brendan Byrne State Forest in Southampton Township, Burlington County. The hunter told CPO Riviello that he had an additional camera set up on the camera that was stolen and got a picture of a suspect removing his camera. CPO Riviello obtained the photograph of the suspect and through extensive interviews of local hunters and residents in the area, he was able to identify him. The following day CPO Riviello interviewed the suspect who admitted to stealing the camera. The suspect returned the camera to CPO Riviello and was issued a summons. The camera was returned to its owner.

While off duty, CPO Mutone was outside her residence when she heard a motor vehicle accelerate down the street and then crash. The vehicle overturned across the street from her residence. She immediately ran to the scene. She could hear a female yelling for help inside the overturned vehicle. She attempted to open the doors, but they were still locked and the injured driver couldn't unlock the doors. CPO Mutone went to her patrol vehicle, removed a glass braking hammer, and broke the window to access the driver. She then assisted the driver out of the vehicle and provided medical care until EMS and local police arrived on the scene.

One evening, Lt. McManus received information that there was an out-of-control bonfire on the Assunpink WMA (Upper Freehold Township). He responded along with NJ State Police and a local fire company. Ten individuals were apprehended that were still on the scene of the fire, which now had extended to the trees next to the lake. The fire was extinguished and all of the individuals were issued summonses for entering a WMA after legal hours and building a fire.

Officers in the Central Region performed nighttime patrols of Greenwood and Assunpink WMAs to address illegal activity occurring at night. They were able to stop two separate groups of people entering the WMA after hours to set up bonfires. One group had a large pile of wooden pallets that were going to be utilized as fuel. Summonses were issued and the parties were dispersed before any damage to the WMA's was initiated.

Southern Region Highlights

During the February goose season, CPOs Vazquez and Kille responded to a complaint of illegal hunting. The complainant provided the officers with information and an identity of a man who allegedly shot geese from his motor vehicle. CPOs worked the area where the incident had occurred until CPO Kille was able to find and speak with the identified hunter later that day. During the inquiry, the hunter made a full confession and took responsibility for his actions. The accused also stated that he was

instructed by the waterfowl guide he worked for, to shoot and rally birds for the guided hunt occurring on an adjacent field. The guide had allegedly made statements to the accused advising him that Fish & Wildlife Officers were patrolling the area and he should leave and not cooperate with the officers' investigation. After the accused hunter provided his confession and additional comments, officers Vazquez and Kille spoke with the guide at his residence. During the conversation, the guide made several conflicting statements before finally admitting to being involved. The hunter was charged with having an uncased firearm in a motor vehicle, a loaded firearm in a motor vehicle and shooting from a motor vehicle for the purpose of hunting. The guide was charged with interference with the duties of a conservation police officer.

On January 27 Millville PD responded to a vehicle that drove through a locked gate at Buckshutem WMA in Cumberland County. When the police arrived, they saw the damaged gate laying on the ground and observed the suspect vehicle as it fled the scene. Before the vehicle fled, the officers were able to view the registration and get a description of the individual driving the vehicle. This information was relayed to CPO Fox who followed up and spoke with the registered owner of the vehicle. She explained the vehicle had been driven by her fiance that night, but he was not currently home. Later that day, CPOs Fox and Kille returned to the residence and interviewed the suspect obtaining a full confession. The individual was issued summonses for damage to state property, entering a closed road or prohibited area and entering a WMA during closed hours.

Marine Region Highlights

On 2/21/2023 Conservation Police Officers Woerner and Bahrle conducted an inspection of a commercial fishing vessel in Point Pleasant Beach, Ocean County. As the crew began to offload their catch the officers quickly realized that the vessel was going to be over its 100-pound trip limit of weakfish. The vessel was initially found to be in possession of 122 pounds of weakfish, but an additional seven pounds was located as the officers continued their inspection. Summonses were issued to the captain and owner of the vessel for possessing 29 pounds of weakfish more than the daily trip limit. Court is set for the end of March.

As recreational activity slowed in January, Officers from District 8 focused enforcement efforts on commercial fishing activity. During a commercial inspection of a fish pot vessel, CPO Capri located a small amount of tautog. It was found that the vessel did not possess a commercial non-directed tautog landing permit, and thus could not land any tautog. CPO Capri investigated the vessel's previous landings and found multiple violations, including additional landings of tautog, directed landings of summer flounder without a landing permit, and several dealer reporting violations. Summonses were issued for the violations.

On the evening of February 10, 2023, CPO Raker received a complaint of two individuals keeping closed season and undersized striped bass on the Corbin City Impoundment of Tuckahoe WMA. The complainant stated that the men had already left, but provided detailed information about the two individuals, the area they fished, and the vehicle they were driving. The next day CPO Raker passed the suspect vehicle on the impoundment road and watched the driver walk out to the same location that the violation was reported the previous night. CPO Raker set up surveillance and observed the men retain and hide striped bass at different locations along the marsh. A short time later, in coordination with CPO Tomlin, the two officers were able to recover five undersized striped bass measuring between 18 and 22 inches that were hidden in the marsh grass. The two fishermen were charged with taking striped bass out



of season, possession of undersized striped bass, and the possession of over the limit striped bass.

Training Unit Highlights

The three (3) Conservation Police Officer Recruits began their initial Conservation Police Officer training this month. Their first week was focused on firearm skills and tactics as well as extensive work with the patrol shotgun. They will continue training over the next few months to prepare them for long, successful careers.