



NJDEP Fish and Wildlife
Monthly Highlights
Bureau of Law Enforcement
October 21, 2023 to November 20, 2023

Frank Panico, Chief
Jason Snellbaker, Deputy Chief
Douglas Applegate, Deputy Chief
Vacant, Captain - Administration
Joseph Soell, Lieutenant - 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)
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 Police Officers report a total of 7,210.2 hours of duty (7,165.9 - 2022)
These hours are charged to the following categories of duty:

	2023	2022
Law Enforcement	5,390.5	5,146.0
Fishing	1,323.6	1,396.3
Marine Resources	1,525.7	1,601.1
Hunting	549.5	674.8
Deer Hunting	994.0	1,099.3
Trapping	6.5	7.6
Wildlife Mgt. Areas	224.3	190.2
NG & Endangered Species	7.5	100.0
Court	27.4	35.7
Regional Meetings	46.1	69.4
Pollution Investigation	19.5	37.7
Training	1,248.5	759.5
Other Law Enforcement	643.9	501.6
Administration	1,503.9	1,730.3
Fish Management	0.0	0.0

Wildlife Management	30.1	6.8
Information & Education	21.0	43.0
Bear Control	0.3	2.3
Bear Patrol & Invest	13.3	100.8

During patrols, officers performed 3681 field inspections (4606 - 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	98	36	41	193	0	368	395
Criminal Arrests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warnings Issued	10	1	0	7	0	18	26
Bear Feeding Warns Issued	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Field Inspections By Region

Administration	0
Northern Region	331
Central Region	333
Southern Region	619
Marine Region	2398
Total	3681

Field Inspections By Activity

Hunters	1063
Freshwater Anglers	66
Trappers	1
Commercial Fishermen	19
Marine Rec. Anglers	1649
WMA non hunt/fish	103
Other	23

Listed below are the types of summonses issued:

	<u>North</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>Marine</u>	<u>Admin</u>
Fishing	2	1	3	0	0
Hunting	11	1	10	0	0
Waterfowl Hunting	0	0	0	0	0
Deer Hunting	77	14	19	0	0
Trapping	0	0	0	0	0
WMA	2	19	9	1	0
Striped Bass	6	0	0	0	0
Shellfish	0	0	0	4	0
Marine-Commercial	0	0	0	1	0
Marine-Recreational	0	0	0	166	0
Nongame & Exotic	0	0	0	0	0
Title 58	0	0	0	0	0
Title 39	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	1	0	8	0
Bear Hunting	0	0	0	0	0
Bear Feeding	0	0	0	0	0
Marine Striped Bass	0	0	0	13	0
Title 2C	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	98	36	41	193	0



Penalties collected during this report period by Conservation Police Officers: \$26,025.00

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

North	246
Central	334
South	283
Marine	216
Total Calls Received	1079

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

Administration - 8

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

Northern Region - 12

- 1 CPO III
- 2 CPO II
- 5 CPO I
- 3 RCT
- 1 ASR

Central Region - 9

- 1 CPO III
- 2 CPO II
- 3 CPO I
- 2 RCT
- 1 TA 2

Southern Region - 11

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

Marine Region - 15

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

Special Investigations Unit - 2

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

Total Employees: 57

Northern Region Highlights

On October 29, 2023, CPO J. Sikora responded to a complaint of illegal night hunting in Branchburg Township, Somerset County. CPO J. Sikora responded and met with Branchburg Township Police Department who had apprehended four individuals hunting with the aid of a motor vehicle shortly after midnight. CPO J. Sikora and Branchburg Police located a loaded crossbow in the vehicle along with the front shoulder of a freshly harvested deer. CPO J. Sikora interviewed the four individuals and determined they had been driving around at night spot lighting deer. The individuals informed CPO J. Sikora that the deer shoulder was taken from a deer they shot nearby and quickly thrown in the trunk of the vehicle. CPO J. located the remainder of the deer which had been dumped near the North Branch of the Raritan River before the vehicle tried leaving the parking lot. Once faced with the overwhelming evidence of night hunting the individuals admitted to shooting at deer with the crossbow with the aid of flashlights at night. A total of 40 summonses were issued as part of the investigation.

During the fall bow season, CPO C. Sikora performed a butcher shop inspection and discovered an antlered deer tagged as a doe. The deer's antlers were cut off two and a half inches from the base of the skull. Near the end of the fall bow season, the individual tagged a second antlered deer. CPO C. Sikora and Lieutenant Paey interviewed the suspect, who admitted to cutting off the first deer's antlers, so a second antlered deer could be harvested. The hunter was issued a summons for mutilating game, falsely registering deer, falsely filling out the harvest report, and taking deer over the legal bag limit for fall bow.

On Sunday, November 12, 2023, CPOs C. Sikora and J. Sikora received information regarding illegal hunting activity in Jefferson Township, Morris County. During their investigation, an individual the CPOs interviewed advised that a neighbor harvested a large seven-point buck on November 11, 2023. CPOs C. Sikora and J. Sikora discovered that the neighbor did not tag any deer during the 2023 season and bought a fall permit bow tag ten minutes after they left the area. CPO C. Sikora and J. Sikora interviewed the neighbor, who admitted to not having the proper permits when the deer was harvested. The antlered deer was taken and donated to Hunters Helping the Hungry. The individual was issued the appropriate summonses for the violations.

On Friday, November 17, 2023, CPO A. Sutton arrived at a residence in Montague Township, Sussex County to investigate illegal deer hunting activity. CPO A. Sutton spoke with the homeowner, who advised he just returned from a trip to his cabin in Maine and had Canadians staying at his residence that were hunting the federal and state lands. Through an interview with the homeowner, it was determined a Canadian hunter used the homeowners tag to register a deer while he was in Maine. During the process of the investigation, CPO A. Sutton located two unlabeled eight-point antlered deer heads in the homeowner's yard. CPO A. Sutton seized the heads as evidence. On Saturday, November 18, 2023, CPO A. Sutton received a phone call from an individual who advised the one deer head that was seized was his. CPO A. Sutton confirmed the deer were illegally tagged and not properly labelled and the appropriate summonses were issued to multiple individuals.

Central Region Highlights

CPO Garofalo was provided a photograph of an individual trespassing and stealing a trail camera on private property. During this investigation, CPO Garofalo received an additional photograph of the same individual trespassing on an additional separate property. CPO Garofalo was able to identify the individual and went to his residence for an interview. During the interview, the accused individual admitted to being on those properties and stealing the trail camera. Deer antlers were observed as well at the residence with no confirmation tag or number and were confiscated. The individual was issued summonses for trespassing for the purpose of taking wildlife, hindering the lawful taking of wildlife through theft, possession of unregistered deer antlers, and defiant trespass. The stolen trail camera was returned to the hunter.

On October 28th, Central Region Conservation Police Officers performed a joint nighttime patrol of wildlife management areas to curb illegal activity. In the Caruso Village section of Greenwood WMA, they intercepted a group of individuals entering a location known for past bonfires with pickup truck loads of pallets. The individuals received summonses for unauthorized entry on a wildlife management area during closed hours.

Just before midnight on November 14th, CPO Garofalo responded to the Assunpink WMA boat ramp to assist the New Jersey State Police with a complaint of a group igniting commercial grade fireworks in the parking lot. Four individuals were each issued summonses for building or maintaining a fire on a WMA, blocking a road with a vehicle on a WMA, and unauthorized entry during closed hours.

Southern Region Highlights

CPO Kille received information that an individual exceeded his fall bow bag limit and recently tagged in an 8-point buck using someone else's tag. CPO's Kille and Chillari interviewed the hunter and discovered that the buck was illegally harvested. The deer was seized, and the respective summonses were issued.

CPO Kille responded to a complaint in Winslow WMA, Camden County for hunting pheasants early. The complainants explained that a man and his dog began hunting an hour early on opening day of pheasant season. The CPO arrived and the suspect was gone on arrival. A description of the man was previously provided and approximately 30 minutes after the start of the season the man was found. An interview was conducted whereby the hunter attempted to blame daylight savings time on his early start despite being in possession of a cell phone. The man was charged with hunting pheasants prior to the season opening.

CPO Kille received a phone call from a West Deptford Detective, Gloucester County who weeks earlier was tasked with investigating an incident involving suspected deer hunting. The Detective explained that his department received an anonymous complaint from a citizen who observed two men shoot at a deer from within their vehicle on a highly traveled roadway. The complainant had taken a side profile picture of the suspect vehicle but didn't capture the registration. West Deptford PD and the Gloucester County Prosecutors Office aided in identifying the registered owner. Lt Batten and CPO Kille interviewed the registered owner of the vehicle and eventually obtained a confession from the owner/operator. The passenger was also identified and confessed the same. The CPOs then went to the incident location where Lt Batten discovered a crossbow bolt lodged in a tree consistent with the angle the poachers were suspected of shooting from. The men face multiple counts of hunting without a license, hunting without permits, loaded crossbow within a motor vehicle, hunting with the aid of a motor vehicle and loaded weapon within 450 feet of residences.