



NJDEP Fish and Wildlife
Monthly Highlights
Bureau of Law Enforcement
November 21, 2023 to December 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 Officers report a total of 6,849.9 hours of duty (7,387.8 - 2022) These hours are charged to the following categories of duty:

	2023	2022
Law Enforcement	5,198.5	5,431.1
Fishing	817.3	826.6
Marine Resources	995.1	1,151.8
Hunting	578.9	740.1
Deer Hunting	1,609.1	1,967.3
Trapping	9.5	26.0
Wildlife Mgt. Areas	142.9	109.6
NG & Endangered Species	18.4	123.1
Court	37.4	51.9
Regional Meetings	33.8	0.0
Pollution Investigation	20.0	27.6
Training	991.3	603.4
Other Law Enforcement	731.4	627.8
Administration	1,552.8	1,756.0
Fish Management	0.0	2.5

Wildlife Management	5.8	3.2
Information & Education	3.5	7.0
Bear Control	2.0	0.0
Bear Patrol & Invest	135.9	263.1

During patrols, officers performed 3190 field inspections (3 9 1 1 - 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	113	58	24	58	0	253	179
Criminal Arrests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warnings Issued	8	0	3	3	0	14	22
Bear Feeding Warns Issued	1	0	0	0	0	1	0

Field Inspections By Region

Administration	0
Northern Region	525
Central Region	592
Southern Region	771
Marine Region	1302
Total	3190

Field Inspections By Activity

Hunters	1940
Freshwater Anglers	26
Trappers	1
Commercial Fishermen	13
Marine Rec. Anglers	804
WMA non hunt/fish	36
Other	63

Listed below are the types of summonses issued:

	<u>North</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>Marine</u>	<u>Admin</u>
Fishing	7	1	0	0	0
Hunting	16	12	8	1	0
Waterfowl Hunting	0	1	0	0	0
Deer Hunting	77	34	15	0	0
Trapping	2	0	0	0	0
WMA	4	10	1	0	0
Striped Bass	2	0	0	0	0
Shellfish	0	0	0	0	0
Marine-Commercial	0	0	0	0	0
Marine-Recreational	0	0	0	44	0
Nongame & Exotic	0	0	0	0	0
Title 58	0	0	0	0	0
Title 39	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Bear Hunting	5	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	113	58	24	58	0

Penalties collected during this report period by Conservation Police Officers: \$27,375.50

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

North	228
Central	297
South	308
Marine	174
Total Calls Received	1007

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

Administration - 8

1 Chief
2 Deputy Chiefs
1 CPO II Training
2 CPO I Training
1 CPO II Admin
1 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 opening day of the 2023 six-day firearm season, Lieutenant Holmes and CPO C. Sikora conducted a UTV patrol on the Newark Watershed Property in West Milford Township, Passaic County. Over 40 hunters were inspected while patrolling the large property on the UTV. These inspections were done in very remote areas, not accessible to patrol vehicles, and resulted in five summonses. The summonses included hunting without hunter orange, possessing a loaded firearm in a motor vehicle, possessing an uncased firearm in a motor vehicle, failure to attach transportation tag to deer, and hunting with a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells.

On December 4, 2023, Lt. Paey received information that an individual, whose hunting privileges were revoked due to previous fish and wildlife violations, was actively hunting in Mansfield Township, Warren County. CPO Jack Sikora and Lt. Paey responded to the location where the individual had been observed entering a wooded area. Lt. Paey and J. Sikora began a foot patrol and

located the individual hunting in a tree-stand without any fluorescent orange on. The individual was apprehended and issued three summonses for hunting while revoked, hunting without a valid license, and hunting with a firearm without wearing florescent hunter orange.

On December 6, 2023, CPO Della Vella was contacted for a complaint of a dumped bear carcass along the roadway in High Point State Park. CPO Della Vella and Lieutenant Holmes met with the complainant and located a total of three dumped bear carcasses. The bear carcasses were collected and taken to the Whittingham Bear Check Station to be weighed and a record search of potential suspects was completed. One of the bear carcasses had a distinct wound that a Wildlife worker remembered seeing on a bear that was checked on Monday at the Flat Brook Bear Check Station. Three bears were brought in at the same time to be weighed on Monday evening and were of similar size to the dumped bears that were recovered along the roadway. Through several phone interviews, the three hunters who had harvested the dumped bears were contacted and confessions were obtained. Summonses for dumping a carcass on state property and for not removing all the edible meat from the carcass were issued to the hunters.

On December 8, 2023, Lt. Paey and CPO Jack Sikora received information regarding a large eight-point antlered deer that had been illegally harvested during the permit bow season. Lt. Paey and CPO J. Sikora were informed that the individual harvested the deer prior to properly obtaining their hunting license, zone permit and buck stub. Officers interviewed the individual, who initially claimed they could not remember when they had harvested the antlered deer. The individual quickly admitted to shooting the large eight-point buck without a valid hunting license, zone permit or buck stub. The individual blamed Walmart, stating they had attempted to purchase their licenses multiple times, but the sporting goods counter was not properly staffed. The large eight-point rack was seized as evidence and the appropriate summonses were issued to the hunter.

Even during the activity of the Six-Day firearm season, District 2 Officers remained vigilant for fishing violations. Officers apprehended multiple individuals for fishing violations including fishing without a valid fishing license, possession of trout without a valid trout stamp, possession of undersized trophy trout, and possession of over the daily limit for trophy trout. The appropriate summonses were issued.

Central Region Highlights

During six-day firearm season, District 3 officers patrolled long days to make sure hunters were compliant with the firearm hunting regulations. During these patrols, numerous summonses were issued including possessing a firearm within 450 feet of a building, hunting without wearing fluorescent hunter orange, hunting with a shotgun capable of holding more than 3 shells, and hunting during closed hours.

During a routine butcher inspection in Mercer County, Lt. Riviello was able to determine that there were multiple deer that were dropped off that had violations. These hunters were interviewed, and various summonses were issued including hunting without a license, failing to register deer, and illegal possession of deer.

During the pheasant stocking season, a hunter reported that he was struck by pellets on the Manahawkin WMA. Central region officers worked diligently to conduct interviews and field work and were able to identify the shooter. The shooter was issued a summons for carelessly discharging a firearm while hunting.

Lt. Riviello received a complaint of a hunter getting his trail camera tampered with on at the Assunpink WMA. The last photograph taken by the camera showed a vehicle driving up to it. Lt. Riviello was able to identify the driver of the vehicle. The driver was interviewed and confessed to chopping down the tree the camera was on. The driver was issued summonses for hindering the apprehension of taking wildlife and damaging vegetation on a WMA.

Southern Region Highlights

On November 28, 2023, CPO Chillari conducted an early morning patrol in Commercial Twp, Cumberland County after receiving complaints of illegal deer hunting in Bear Swamp WMA. While on foot patrol, CPO Chillari witnessed an individual walking down a dirt road just beyond the WMA boundaries. CPO Chillari watched the individual retrieve an ATV from a nearby residence and then drive the ATV through the WMA. The individual was stopped by CPO Chillari and explained that he was looking for his dog. CPO Chillari had the individual park his ATV at the residence and continued a discussion about his activities that morning. CPO Kille, having information that a shot had been heard earlier that morning in the area, conducted additional interviews with a friend of the individual and discovered that he had shot at a deer before legal hunting hours. While at the residence, an additional unregistered deer was discovered by CPOs Chillari and Kille. Several summonses were issued for illegal hunting and WMA related violations.

During six-day firearm season Lt. Batten received a complaint regarding a hunter who reported a cellular trail camera that was stolen from his hunting area located in Maurice River Township, Cumberland County. The trail camera recorded an image of the suspected hunter responsible for the missing property. Lt. Batten recognized the image provided by the complainant and interviewed the suspect at his residence. The interview revealed the hunter had taken the trail camera because he thought the complainant was too close to his private property. The trail camera was recovered and returned to the owner. One charge of hindering the lawful take of wildlife was issued to the accused, his second offense.