



BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION MONTHLY REPORT

Al Ivany, Chief

December 16, 2023 – January 15, 2024

HUNTER EDUCATION/ RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3)/ NASP

Hunter Education (Joe Leskie, Keith Griglak, Sam Forlenza, Courtney Venuti)

Staff began a thorough analysis of both hunter and trapper education student trends during this reporting period.

Staff fielded 493 emails on the general hunter education email address during this report period. Staff created an automated email response, which includes detailed information about the top four requested items (non-resident application, duplicate hunter education card, rifle permit unlocks, and range sessions). It was noticed that upon receiving the automated response, a large percentage of constituents immediately emailed back with all the necessary information for staff to process their request. This will drastically reduce the need for many back and forth emails with constituents.

Staff processed 116 non-resident applications. An overwhelming percentage of these non-residents appear to be coming to New Jersey to hunt during the last few weeks of waterfowl season.

Staff processed 15 rifle permit unlocks. These unlocks tend to spike up this time of year, as the special coyote/fox hunting season opened on January 1, which allows hunters to use a center or rim fire rifle up to .25 caliber to hunt for coyote and fox during daylight hours.

Staff responded to 73 voicemails during the reporting period. The most calls came from non-residents looking to hunt in our state. To accommodate these hunters, staff must obtain proper documentation from them (either a Hunter Education card or a resident license from any state, any year) along with a New Jersey CID number to assist. Hunters that do not have a CID number must be assisted in order to obtain one. Once all information is received and the update is made, hunters receive an email alerting them that they can now purchase hunting licenses and permits within New Jersey and how to go about doing so.

Staff received 33 requests for duplicate Hunter Education cards and processed 55 individual disciplines for these constituents. Additional requests were also made and researched, but unable to be located due to the year of completion. In these instances, staff utilize multiple avenues to try and locate these records. If found, the information is verified on the hunter's profile in New Jersey's licensing system.

Staff attended a meeting with the Licensing and GIS teams to discuss potential projects in the future that will allow us to better track and analyze student and hunter data.

S. Forlenza began preparing presentations for the NJ Federation of Sportsman's Clubs Convention and Outstanding Deer Program Banquet scheduled for this spring. A presentation on non-lead and blood-trailing are also being developed.

K. Griglak scored a white-tailed deer during the report period. The Typical velvet buck grossed 159 0/8 and netted 148 7/8. It was harvested in Zone 36. Information on New Jersey's Outstanding Deer Awards Program was given to the hunter.

Staff are actively taking inventory of supplies in preparation for the 2024 hunter education season.

Trapper Education

Staff began a thorough analysis of trapper education student trends. Most noteworthy is that trapper education student numbers for calendar year 2023 had increased by more than 30% from the previous year. This is the third year in a row with a 30+ percent increase in trapper education students.

Miscellaneous

K. Griglak assisted with coordinating a deer butchering demonstration in partnership with Hunters Helping the Hungry (HHH). Growmark and Game Butchers also assisted in the endeavor. The event was held on January 6, 2024.

Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation/R3 (Joe Leskie, Tiffany Woolley, Courtney Venuti)

R3 staff along with K. Griglak partnered with Hunters Helping the Hungry (HHH) for a Deer Processing and Butchering workshop on Saturday, January 6 at the Growmark Fertilizer Company in Bloomsbury. R3 staff handled registration and promotion of the event. There were 110 applicants and due to the space of the facility, 30 participants were selected. R3 staff also handled onsite check-in. A total of 17 people attended: 15 registered participants and two guests. Staff sent out a post-workshop survey to attendees. Survey analysis will be forthcoming.

R3 staff worked on logistics of partnering again with Hunters Helping the Hungry for another Deer Processing and Butchering Workshop. This second workshop is planned to take place at Valley Butcher in Pennington on February 3 for 20 participants.

R3 staff met with Fish and Wildlife's Licensing and GIS sections to discuss how to utilize their reports for information regarding hunter demographics, hunter education history and harvest reports as well as using GIS mapping.

Staff continues to work on updating the Mentor and Mentee database. This includes redefining what the program will look like in the future as well as contacting mentees in the current database about upcoming R3 Programs. This allows our R3 mentees to have priority for programs after engaging in the necessary steps to be mentored.

C. Venuti continued working on the winter edition of the R3 Newsletter due out in February. The newsletter contains information about upcoming events, tips for hunters, summaries of past events, harvest information, recipes, and fun facts.

R3 Tuckahoe Managed Waterfowl Hunt

Staff continued to work Tuckahoe Managed Waterfowl Hunts during the report period. Eleven regular season hunt dates resulted in 88 waterfowl hunters (32 groups) who were able to take advantage of the opportunity. During these dates, a total of 17 ducks and one goose were harvested during the report period, consisting of: Mallard (3), Pintail (2), Merganser (4), Black Duck (3), Bufflehead (4) and Canada Goose (1). A total of 11 of those groups took advantage of the R3 Decoy Loaner Program.

T. Woolley and J. Belfi worked on the north and south sides of the impoundments checking water levels as well as working on path maintenance for hunters to easily get to the blinds. This included moving reflectors and redirecting walking paths for easier hunter access.

Staff continued to collect hunter exit surveys for analysis of the program.

R3 Miscellaneous

J. Leskie completed the R3 NEAFWA Regional survey to determine the needs of New Jersey's R3 Program. Currently, the importance of partnerships and working with those partnerships has been identified as an important aspect for success.

NASP® (Joe Leskie, Craig Decker)

Staff scheduled, planned, and coordinated upcoming Basic Archery Instructor (BAI) Trainings and site visits with numerous schools/organizations during the report period.

Staff taught a NASP Basic Archery Instructor Certification Class at Warren County Technical School with four teachers passing certification.

Staff reactivated Belvidere High School as a NASP certified school with two new instructors now fully trained and running the program.

Staff conducted a site evaluation at Sparta Middle School regarding installation and layout of their archery range.

Staff held a meeting at Newton High School assisting and guiding facility staff with proper range preparations and instituting safety protocols.

Staff processed a NASP Easton Foundation Grant request/award of \$1,500.00 for a new school toward an initial archery equipment kit. This brings this year's 2023-24 school season grant participation to 10 schools for an award total of \$5,800.

Staff developed, submitted, and procured banners for display at the 2024 NJ NASP Virtual State Bullseye Tournament. The banners are designed so that they can be used for all future tournaments.

Staff is receiving and monitoring school registrations for the 2024 NJ NASP/IBO 3-D State Tournament being held at Warren Hills High School on February 24, 2024.

Staff is receiving, scheduling, and monitoring school registrations for the 2024 NJ NASP Virtual State Bullseye Tournament occurring from February to March of 2024.

AQUATIC EDUCATION (Karen Byrne, Jessica Griglak, Alanna Newmark, Marc Rogoff)

Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center

Staff is working on figuring out the best way to refinish the floors at the Sedge House. Many sections are worn down to the bare wood.

The Sedge Island College Summer Program was posted on the Fish & Wildlife website, and DEP promoted it on *Handshake*. Several applications have been received.

Trout in the Classroom (TIC)

Contact with teachers continues. A restock of fish is being planned for those schools that lost all of their fish.

Staff is working on developing a Beyond TIC program that would offer virtual and in school programs to current TIC participants. This program will develop a deeper partnership with Trout Unlimited members by having them assist with offering programs.

Angler R3

An interactive Ice Fishing Seminar has been scheduled for February 4 at the Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center. Applications are being accepted until January 24. Those selected will be notified on January 26.

Staff continues to conduct site visits for possible *Let's Go Fishing* workshops in 2024. Waterbodies in Mercer and Somerset counties were visited.

A Veterans Surf Fishing Workshop is being planned for May 18 in conjunction with the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament, which is being held on May 19.

An end-of-season evaluation was completed by 2023 *Let's Go Fishing* and *First Catch Center* workshop participants. The evaluation was sent to 83 individuals and completed by 31, giving a response rate of 37%. Of those that completed the survey, more than half have gone fishing since participating in the workshop (68%), and just over half (51%) went fishing more than two times. Almost all respondents (94%) indicated that they were very likely to go fishing in 2024. Survey participants were also asked if there was anything that would increase the likelihood that they would fish in the future. The overwhelming majority indicated that knowing where to go (71%) was an important factor, followed by having someone to go with (45%), feeling more confident in the fishing skills acquired (39%) and having more free time available to do it (35%).

Staff is developing a Fishing Education Instructor Training to coordinate volunteers who assist with fishing education programs. Two trainings will be offered: one in the north at the Hackettstown State Fish Hatchery, and one in the south at Square Circle Sportsman's Club in Camden County.

Staff attended a meeting with licensing and GIS staff to discuss types of customer data and reports that can be made available.

Education

Staff attended the Alliance for New Jersey Environmental Educators Winter Conference at The College of New Jersey.

Staff continues to work on finalizing the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for the NJ Trout in the Classroom activity guide.

Staff is developing content for a new webpage for outreach programs, lesson plans and curriculum supplements.

Staff is creating new interactive materials for outreach displays and exhibits.

Other

Initial materials for the 2024 Marine Digest were submitted to the publisher and the first pass was received back for review by Marine Fisheries staff.

Staff continues to work on coordinating a women's focused workshop component for the NJ State Federation of Sportsman's Clubs Conference. A conference planning meeting was attended.

WILDLIFE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH (Karen Byrne, Jessica Griglak, Liz Jackson, Alanna Newmark)

Pequest Natural Resource Education Center

Registration for school and group trips opened on January 2. The 2024 calendar is starting to fill.

A Holiday Tree Fly Tying program was held for five people.

A Winter Solstice Hike was held for nine people.

January public programs have been scheduled focusing on winter hikes.

Staff continue to work on the new exhibits by gathering images and display items.

Mobile Education Trailer (MET)

A few requests for the Mobile Education Trailer (MET) were received for the spring and we are continuing to work on scheduling these events.

Hooked on Fishing Program

Staff will hold the annual Team Leader Gathering at the Assunpink Conservation Center Saturday, February 17, 2024. This meeting will provide program updates, opportunities for peer sharing and learning, obtaining feedback from HOFNDO Team Leaders on programmatic changes, and discussing professional development possibilities.

Staff will be assisting with the Fishing Education Instructor Training set for March at the Hackettstown Hatchery.

Staff has begun coordination of this year's Youth Fishing Challenge set for June 1, which is also Free Fishing Day.

WEBSITE ACTIVITY (Doug Rizio)

New and Updated Pages, Images, and Documents

Four (4) news updates were posted in December.

One (1) job post was also published, while nineteen (19) were deleted after their closing dates.

Six (6) new pages were created as well, all for Fish and Wildlife Councils and Committees; while one (1) page was deleted or consolidated into other pages.

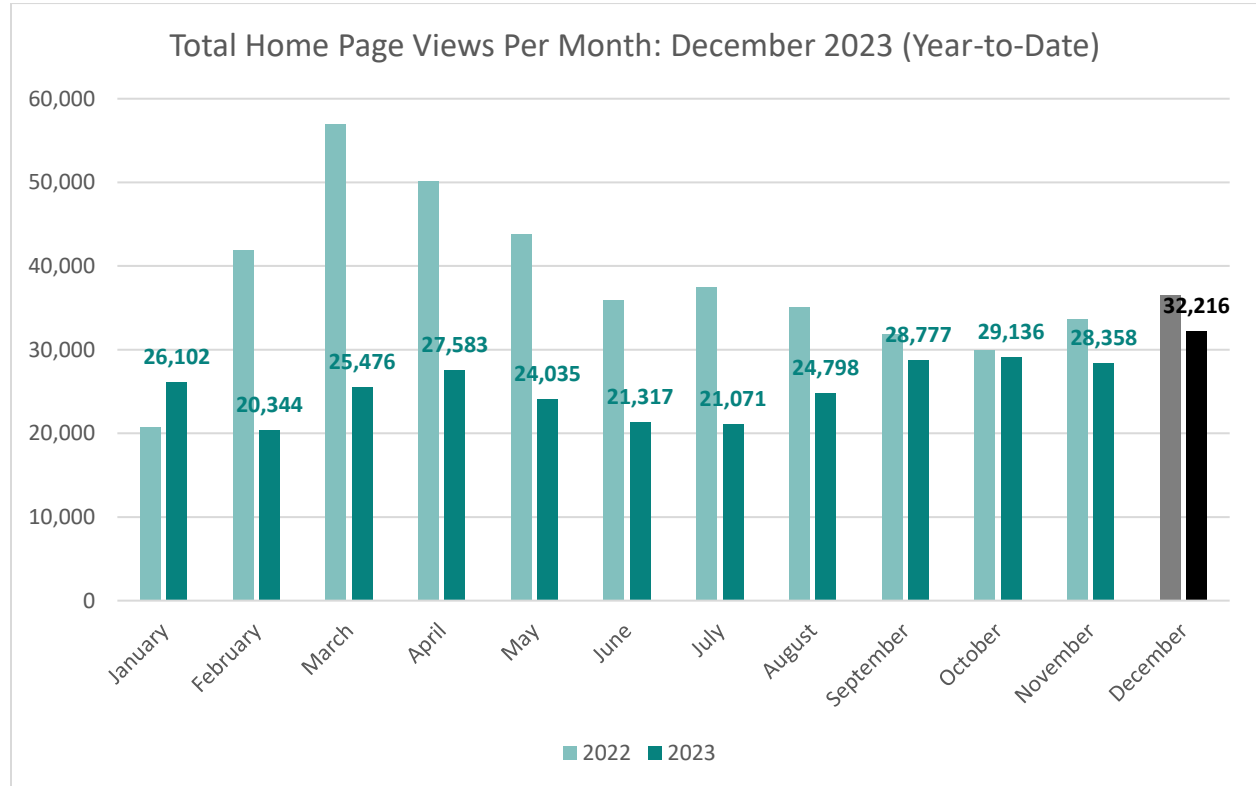
Approximately fifty-three (53) pages were revised/updated during the report period.

Approximately seventy-five (75) documents were edited in or converted to PDF format. These included: Bureau Reports (9) in one .zip file; Council Meeting Documents (15) in one zip file; Council Minutes/Notices/Agendas (9); Job Descriptions (1); segments of the 2024 Freshwater Fishing Digest (8); Species Regulations (16); and others (7).

Thirty-six (36) images and two (2) videos were also edited and posted.

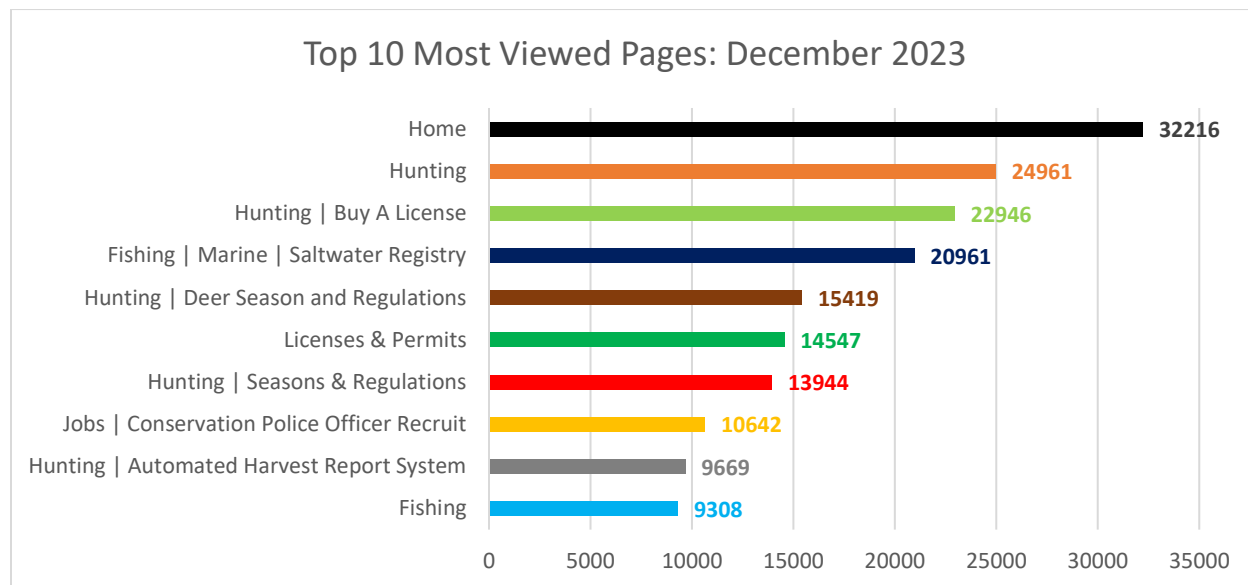
Analytics – Home Page

The number of views on the home page in December was 32,216; an average of about 1,040 views per day. It is an increase of 3,858 views from the previous month of November (28,358) and a decrease of 4,337 views from December of the previous year (36,553).

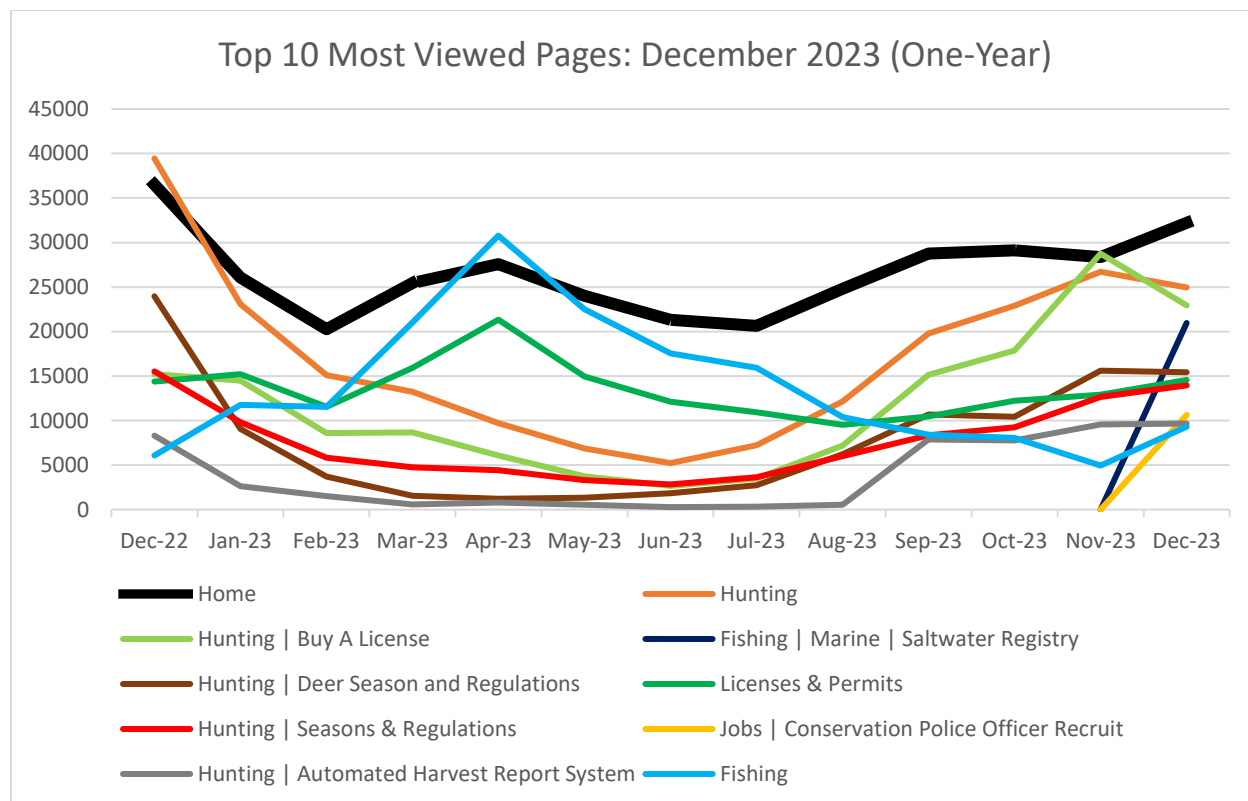


Analytics

The top ten most viewed web pages in December (including the home page) are shown below:



Also shown below are the performances of this December's top ten pages since the previous year:

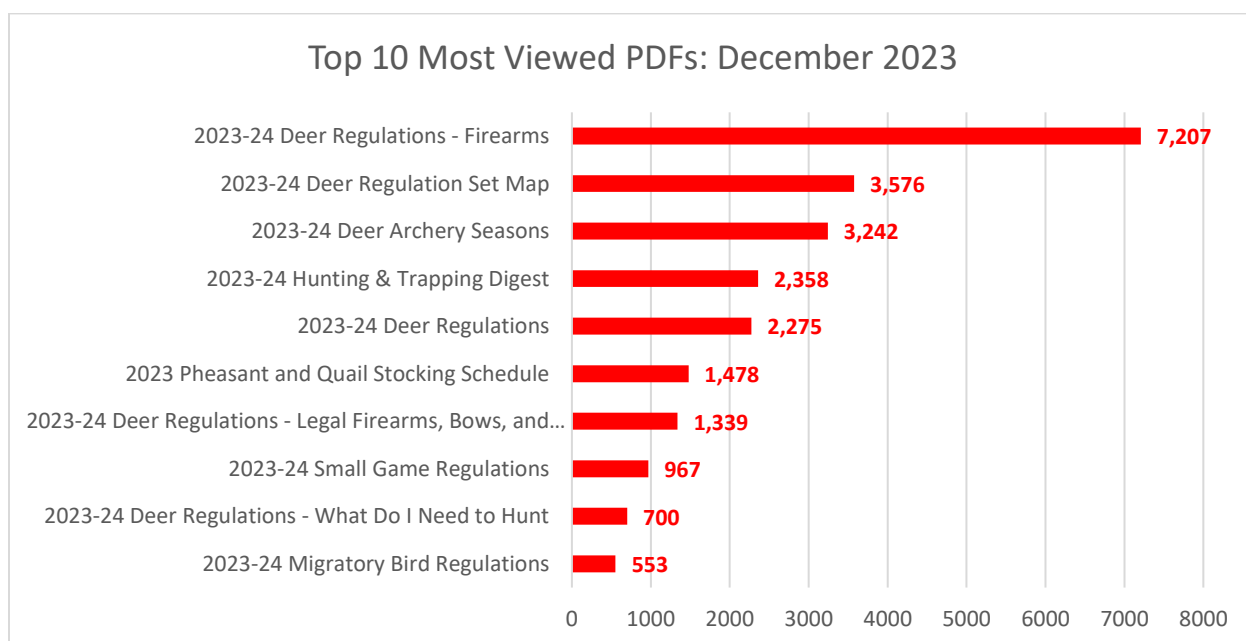


Rank	Page Name	Views
1	Home	32,216
2	Hunting	24,961
3	Hunting Buy A License	22,946
4	Fishing Marine Saltwater Registry	20,961
5	Hunting Deer Season and Regulations	15,419
6	Licenses & Permits	14,547
7	Hunting Seasons & Regulations	13,944
8	Jobs Conservation Police Officer Recruit	10,642
9	Hunting Automated Harvest Report System	9,669
10	Fishing	9,308

Other popular pages on the website were:

Rank	Page Name	Views
11	Fishing and Hunting License and Permit Information	9,173
12	Hunting and Trapping Digest	7,757
13	Bears Bear Hunting Season Information	7,085
14	Marine	6,979
15	Jobs	6,722
16	Bears Black Bear Harvest Data	6,463
17	Hunting Hunter Education	5,386
18	Marine Recreational Fish & Wildlife	5,146
19	Migratory Bird Season Information and Population Status	4,968
20	Freshwater Buy A License	4,853

The ten most requested PDFs this report period were:



Rank	PDF Name	Views
1	2023-24 Deer Regulations - Firearms	7,207
2	2023-24 Deer Regulation Set Map	3,576
3	2023-24 Deer Archery Seasons	3,242
4	2023-24 Hunting & Trapping Digest	2,358
5	2023-24 Deer Regulations	2,275
6	2023 Pheasant and Quail Stocking Schedule	1,478
7	2023-24 Deer Regulations - Legal Firearms, Bows, and Ammunition	1,339
8	2023-24 Small Game Regulations	967
9	2023-24 Deer Regulations - What Do I Need to Hunt?	700
10	2023-24 Migratory Bird Regulations	553

Additional Activities

Additional activities included bi-weekly Outreach Group meetings and Commissioner's Updates.

WILDLIFE INFORMATION/PUBLIC OUTREACH (Linda DiPiano)

GovDelivery (Listserv) Messages

Five (5) email messages were drafted and sent to various e-mail lists and outdoor writers. Assistance was provided to staff with seven (7) additional messages.

1. 2024 Freshwater Fishing Digest Now Available in Stores! (12/19/23)
2. Job Opportunity with NJDEP Fish & Wildlife (12/21/23)
3. Happy Holidays! (12/22/23)
4. Save the Date for the 2024 Deer Classic! (12/27/23)
5. Fish & Game Council Meeting Comments to be Made in Person (1/2/24)

GovDelivery List numbers To Date

	1/2/2024
Freshwater Fishing	63307
Hunting	43722
Marine Fishing	59428
Wildlife	41783
Education	36623
Endangered Species	32742
Shellfish	39243
Outdoors	45785
Sparta Mt.	28220

CHANJ		32656
Marine CARES Act Information		16834
Marine Fisheries Grant and Assistance Information		3886
Total		444229

Responses to the Public Email Address

Approximately 178 emails came to the public email address. A total of 161 were either directly responded to or forwarded to agency staff for response; all others required no response.

Outstanding Deer Program

Twenty (20) out of 29 participants in the 2022-23 Outstanding Deer Program will be displaying their mounts in the 2024 Deer Classic.

All participants have been invited to the Awards Dinner given by the New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs.

Freshwater Fishing Digest

Hard copies of the Freshwater Fishing Digest were available in stores on December 19, 2024.

Marine Digest

All new information for the Marine Digest was uploaded to the publisher on January 2, 2024. The first pass of the digest was received back from the publisher on January 5, 2024, and it was immediately sent to Marine Fisheries staff with a due date of January 18, 2024.

Hunting and Trapping Digest

Staff received the working copy of the 2024-25 Hunting and Trapping digest from the publisher and sent it to wildlife staff with a due date of January 31, 2024.

Wildlife Conservation Corps

The Wildlife Conservation Corps now has 4,665 members.

No volunteer opportunities were sent during this reporting period.

Other

Attended a meeting with Assistant Commissioner Golden, AD Kopkash, Business Administration staff, I&E staff and Marine Fisheries staff regarding the Saltwater Registry move to the electronic licensing system.

Attended a meeting with Business Administration and I&E staff regarding the various reports which can be made via the electronic licensing system that could eventually help with R3, direct emails, reporting statistics, etc.

Attended a meeting with the NJ State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs regarding the 2024 Deer Classic and Convention as well as a one-day R3 sampler class for women. Details continue to be finalized and a good working relationship continues to grow.

WILDLIFE INFORMATION – INTERNAL COMMUNICATION (Kathy Porutski)

Internal Communication (IC) topics that were *written or edited* and sent out this month include:

Passing of Former Agency Director Bob McDowell

Message from Director Golden ~ Happy Holidays!

NOV Postings (5) – NJFW

Conservation Police Officer 3

Agency Services Representative 3

Contract Administrator 3

Senior Wildlife Worker

Crew Supervisor Wildlife Worker

NOV Posting - NJFW (Senior Wildlife Worker)

December Bureau Reports

Secret Retirement Collection for Dan Baker

Millville Office Without Power

NOV Posting - NJFW (Analyst Trainee)

Millville Office Up & Running

New Procurement Procedure for Fed. Accounts - Centralized Mailbox Est. for Documents

NOV Reposting - NJFW (Agency Services Representative)

Also, during this reporting period: the Bureau of Information and Education's Monthly Report for December was compiled and edited; historical documents were searched for information on hunting licenses; staff completed the NJFW Web Survey for the Bureau of Information and Education; several employees who are no longer employed with us were removed from the IC email list; and files were searched for historical information/items that could be useful for the new Pequest exhibits.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Jonathan Carlucci)

Publications/Graphics

- ENSP CHANJ project sticker - two new designs for staff review
- Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament promo art updates, language, and logos
- ENSP CHANJ project 4x6 postcard design started
- Images/manipulations for social posts
- Turkey research project graphic versions created for webpage
- Changes to Wildlife Habitat Supporter art provided to review team
- Deer Management and the Farmer brochures delivered
- "New Jersey Wildlife" logo drafts made; art provided to review team
- QR code versions created for Pequest survey page
- Folder of images updated for display options
- Modified print requests and cloud drive for art
- Deer Management in Your Community brochure content review for design
- QR code URL updates to reflect changed website links

Social Media

Coverage of the NJDEP F&W Facebook and Instagram pages was provided from November to January 2, including social write-ups, some responses to the public, post scheduling and calendar updates for the period.

The DFW Facebook (FB) page had approximately **49,000** followers at the end of this reporting period.

Please send all future social post requests to Katie Paey - Katie.Paey@dep.nj.gov

Photography/Videography

- Tuckahoe WMA site visits and footage with hunter profile
- ENSP CHANJ project sticker and magnet designs created for staff review
- Multi-state turkey research project site visit for species and staff work documentation
- Tuckahoe WMA still shots and aerial footage delivered to video editor
- Review of photos and footage, files reduced and shared with video producer
- WMA images provided for promos
- Mavic Firmware updated
- Documentation of operational intent for sUAV
- Production talks with staff on upcoming video projects

- Footage pulled from iCloud and put up to One Drive
- Review and upload 7 GB of footage and stills for sharing with staff

Meetings/Training

sUAS Meeting

Meeting with Bureau of Wildlife Management staff

ENSP meeting on promotional piece requests

Monthly flight training performed

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Matt Hencheck)

Video Production

- *Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area* promo – Filmed many scenic landscapes around the Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area as well as having a staff member pose as a waterfowl and pheasant hunter. Each month, we focus on promoting a different wildlife management area, highlighting the landscapes over different seasons, as well as the recreational uses the public can enjoy at each. This video is scheduled to be posted in early February.
- Tiger Salamander Survey – In late December, I started to document ENSP Zoologist Bill Pitts and staff as they started conducting tiger salamander survey work in Cape May County. This survey started in late December and will continue through early spring. There will be a few more trips to document. Once we have all the footage, we will produce a full video as well as short promo videos for social media.
- Wild Turkey Project – A new survey on the state's wild turkey population has begun and will be conducted by NJDEP Fish and Wildlife biologists. This project began in January and will continue throughout the year. We will document the project's many steps/phases with plans to produce a full video later in the year as well as short promo videos for social media.

SOCIAL MEDIA (Katie Paey)

Katie Paey returned from maternity leave on January 2.

Facebook

The NJFW Facebook (FB) page had **49,003 followers** at the end of this reporting period.

The total reach of the NJFW Facebook page during this reporting period was 84,700 people.

Eight (8) Facebook posts were posted this period. Posts include photographs and video taken by staff, graphic pieces created for special promotions and shared posts from other pages.

Post topics included: Employment Opportunity, Turkey Trapping, Go Fish Fridays, Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament, Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, and Sedge College Program.

Posts with the most reach and engagement this period – **Reach** is the number of unique people who have seen content associated with our Facebook page. **Engagement** is post clicks, likes, comments and shares (any action someone takes on the page or post):

1/4 – Turkey Trapping Research – reached **58,039** people, **5,362** engagements

Staff continues to like and respond to comments and other questions on our Fish & Wildlife FB page in post comment threads, direct messages to our page, event postings and outside timeline posts.

Instagram

The NJFW Instagram page had **15,294 followers** at the end of this reporting period.

The total reach of the NJFW Instagram page during this reporting period was 10,400 people.

Six (6) Instagram posts were posted this period. Posts include photographs and video taken by staff, and graphic pieces created for promotions.

Post topics included: Turkey Trapping, Go Fish Fridays, Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament, Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, and Sedge College Program.

Two (2) Instagram stories were posted this period. Topics included: Employment Opportunities.

Instagram highlighted stories were updated and expired stories were removed from page highlights.

The Linktree account links in the NJFW Instagram page bio were updated.

Instagram posts with the most reach this period –

1/4 – Turkey Trapping Research – reached **7,837** people with **536** interactions

Staff monitored and responded to comments and private messages.

Outreach, Marketing and Other:

- Content was added to the shared Social Media/GovDelivery content calendar.
- Graphics were created for use on social media.
- Photos were edited for use on social media.
- Mandatory eLearning training was completed.

OUTREACH (Michelle Smith)

Outreach Group

Job support was provided to Outreach Group staff on initiatives, including the bear outreach program, social media, agency website, videography, graphics projects and administrative matters.

Biweekly Outreach Group meetings were conducted.

Content was prepared for the Tuckahoe WMA of the Month promotional messages.

BLACK BEAR EDUCATION (Michelle Smith)

Bids were received from marketing firm vendors to implement an FY2024 black bear multi-media outreach campaign. Fish and Wildlife will begin the project in the spring and peak marketing will coincide with the spring and fall 2024 bear activity periods. Millions of residents will be reached in their homes and on their mobile devices with bear safety information.

A meeting was scheduled for the marketing vendor to present the results of the FY23 bear marketing campaign and behavioral analysis study. The marketing vendor will also present the results to the New Jersey Fish and Game Council at a future meeting.