



NJDEP Fish and Wildlife
Monthly Highlights
Bureau of Law Enforcement
December 21, 2023 to January 20, 2024

Frank Panico, Chief
Jason Snellbaker, Deputy Chief
Douglas Applegate, Deputy Chief
Joseph Soell, Captain - 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 5,641.6 hours of duty (5,912.9 - 2023)

These hours are charged to the following categories of duty:

	2024	2023
Law Enforcement	3,993.3	4,145.8
Fishing	490.1	530.2
Marine Resources	671.3	928.9
Hunting	465.1	478.1
Deer Hunting	729.5	683.8
Trapping	64.7	88.4
Wildlife Mgt. Areas	164.1	209.1
NG & Endangered Species	19.2	119.5
Court	41.2	27.6
Regional Meetings	0.0	116.6
Pollution Investigation	10.9	44.7
Training	1,135.9	811.7
Other Law Enforcement	635.4	572.4
Administration	1,551.9	1,636.9
Fish Management	3.0	0.0

Wildlife Management	8.0	28.0
Information & Education	8.0	9.3
Bear Control	0.0	0.0
Bear Patrol & Invest	0.0	1.0

During patrols, officers performed 1017 field inspections (1 6 2 8 - 2023) 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>2023</u>
Summonses Issued	38	19	17	27	0	101	127
Criminal Arrests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warnings Issued	6	1	3	0	0	10	15
Bear Feeding Warns Issued	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Field Inspections By Region

Administration	4
Northern Region	167
Central Region	179
Southern Region	405
Marine Region	262
Total	1017

Field Inspections By Activity

Hunters	650
Freshwater Anglers	60
Trappers	4
Commercial Fishermen	18
Marine Rec. Anglers	125
WMA non hunt/fish	72
Other	25

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	0	0	0	0
Hunting	9	7	11	4	0
Waterfowl Hunting	0	0	0	2	0
Deer Hunting	15	7	3	0	0
Trapping	0	0	0	0	0
WMA	5	0	3	0	0
Striped Bass	1	0	0	0	0
Shellfish	0	0	0	7	0
Marine-Commercial	0	0	0	6	0
Marine-Recreational	0	0	0	8	0
Nongame & Exotic	0	0	0	0	0
Title 58	0	0	0	0	0
Title 39	0	0	0	0	0
Other	1	5	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	38	19	17	27	0



Penalties collected during this report period by Conservation Police Officers: \$24377.00

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

North	162
Central	98
South	128
Marine	112
Total Calls Received	500

Bureau of Law Enforcement personnel status as of Jan 20, 2024

Administration - 8

- 1 Chief
- 2 Deputy Chiefs
- 1 CPO II Training
- 2 CPO I Training
- 1 CPO III 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 December 23, CPO J. Sikora received a complaint about a decomposing antlered deer that was found dumped on private property. CPO J. Sikora interviewed the property owner who advised that the deer carcass appeared early that morning. CPO J. Sikora interviewed the property owner's neighbor who stated that the deer was last seen alive over a month ago on trail camera. CPO J. Sikora received a tip regarding the identity of the person that could have dumped the antlered deer and that they may have already received summonses for violations involving the dumped deer. CPO J. Sikora contacted Lt Paey in reference to the antlered deer. Photographs of the antlered deer were sent to Lt Paey who advised it was the same deer harvested by an individual he inspected during the early permit bow season. The individual received summonses for failing to properly register the antlered deer as required. CPO J. Sikora interviewed the individual regarding the antlered deer who fully admitted to dumping of the deer

on someone else's property without permission. The individual received two summonses for wanton waste of edible portions of meat and dumping game parts.

With the recent cold weather CPOs in the Northern Region have been busy with ice fishing patrols. CPOs A. Sutton and J. Sikora observed two individuals ice fishing on Lake Hopatcong. CPOs set up surveillance and watched both individuals catch a large quantity of panfish. Upon inspection, the two were found to be in possession of a total of 141 Yellow Perch. The two individuals received court mandatory summonses for being in possession of 91 Yellow Perch over their legal creel limit. CPO Della Vella inspected multiple anglers ice fishing on Budd Lake where he apprehended two individuals for fishing without a valid 2024 fishing license and one individual for possession of an undersized Northern Pike. CPO C. Sikora and CPO Recruit Coiro inspected multiple anglers at Silver Lake and Johnson Pond. CPOs issued summonses to two individuals for fishing without a valid 2024 license. CPO A. Sutton and CPO Recruit Parham inspected an individual who had been ice fishing at Lake Hopatcong and found them to be in possession of an undersized Tiger Muskie. The individual received a summons for being in possession of one undersized Tiger Muskie.

On the last day of the black bear extension hunt, CPO C. Sikora and Lt. Holmes were patrolling Norvin Green State Forest in West Milford Township, Passaic County. Both CPOs observed an individual driving a four-wheeler with a cocked crossbow mounted on the front. CPO C. Sikora stopped the individual and when he asked to see his hunting license, the hunter drove away. Unable to follow the hunter, CPOs later identified the suspect and interviewed him after the incident. He was charged with possession of a cocked crossbow in a motor vehicle, using a bow during permit firearm season, hunting with a bow during closed permit bow season, failure to exhibit license upon request, interference with the duties of a conservation police officer, hunting with the aid of a motor vehicle, and operating an all-terrain vehicle on state park property.

Central Region Highlights

Central Region Officers have been conducting waterfowl hunting patrols throughout the region. On January 12th, CPO Bickerton inspected two non-resident hunters in the coastal zone at Great Bay Blvd. WMA. Both hunters received summonses for failure to possess a HIP certificate. The next day CPO Bickerton returned to Great Bay Blvd. WMA where despite challenging weather conditions and road flooding he inspected two hunters. They were found to not have 2024 hunting licenses. Summonses for hunting without a valid license were issued and the waterfowl they had harvested were confiscated.

While on patrol, Lt. Riviello received a complaint of trespassing for the purpose of hunting. Lt. Riviello promptly responded and found that the individual was hunting with a shotgun for deer while the permit shotgun season was closed. The hunter was issued a summons for hunting during a closed season and a warning for trespass. The following week, Lt. Riviello discovered that the same hunter shot a deer during the closed shotgun season a few days after receiving the summons. Lt. Riviello contacted the hunter explaining that the season still wasn't open and that he had advised the hunter of when it opened on the previous encounter. The hunter was issued an additional summons for hunting during a closed season.

During the summer of 2023 Conservation Police Officers and staff from the Bureau of Lands Management located several large piles of solid waste in the Assunpink WMA. Over the course of a lengthy investigation CPO Garofalo and Lts Riviello and McManus were able to determine the origin the construction debris. Though the piles came from different construction sites, through interviews of home

owners and contractors, the officers identified one suspect responsible for all of the waste. The suspect was issued four summonses for dumping on a Wildlife Management Area, and one summons for improper disposal of solid waste greater than 0.148 yards, a disorderly persons offense subject to a fine of not less than \$5000 and three times the costs associated with the cleanup.

Southern Region Highlights

While on patrol, CPOs Capri and Malinski apprehended two ATVs riding on the Tuckahoe WMA. One of the operators was observed attempting to conceal an open can of beer. The operators of the ATVs were issued ten summonses for the violations including operating an ATV on a state WMA, possession of alcohol on a state WMA, possession of an open container in a motor vehicle, operating an ATV without a protective helmet and several others.

Conservation Police Officers Vazquez, Malinski and Lt. Batten responded to a call for assistance from Vineland P.D. Officers from Vineland P.D. observed two men exit the woods near a suspected burglary in progress. A search of the area by Vineland officers uncovered two loaded shotguns hastily covered with leaves. After several intentionally dishonest statements, it was determined that the individuals were coyote hunting, and were issued 11 summonses in total for hunting coyote outside legal hours, possession of illegal missiles, and for possession of a slug without improved sights.

During the January portion of the Permit Shotgun season CPO Fox inspected a group of hunters driving deer on the Buckshutem Wildlife Management Area. After checking licenses and permits CPO Fox drove around the woodlot to find the hunters' parked vehicles. One hunter was present and possessed a loaded firearm well inside of 450' to a residence, which he was issued a summons for. CPO Fox also observed two bucks in the back of a pickup truck. One had freshly broken antlers with what appeared to be tool marks on the remaining main antler beam. The hunters were in an Antler Point Restricted zone requiring bucks to have three points on one side. It was believed this buck did not meet the APR requirements and the antlers were broken to conceal the sub-legal buck. Lt. Batten and CPO Trembley arrived to assist as the group of hunters returned to their vehicles. The hunter who killed the deer was questioned and it was determined the hunter registered the buck as a doe. Two summonses were issued to the hunter and the illegal deer was seized and subsequently donated to a hunter in need.

CPO Stites received notification from Trenton Dispatch, that waterfowl hunters observed another nearby group of hunters at the Salem River WMA shoot a Sand Hill Crane. With the information given from the concerned sportsman, CPO Stites located the suspected hunters. While interviewing the hunters, CPO Stites received a full confession from the individual that shot, recovered, and hid the Sand Hill Crane. The individual recovered the crane for CPO Stites and was issued a summons.

Marine Region Highlights

In early January, CPO Bahrle was patrolling the Sandy Hook Bay area when he observed two clambers, which were participating in the hard clam depuration program, harvesting clams from the Atlantic Highlands Municipal Harbor. The harbor is classified as prohibited waters and the harvesting of shellfish from this location is not allowed due to the potential health risk. CPO Bahrle apprehended the clambers as they were returning to the depuration plant to offload their product. All clams aboard the vessels were returned to the waters and summonses were issued to the clambers for harvesting shellfish from prohibited waters and for harvesting clams from an area not specified for the depuration program. The clambers face significant penalties, which includes a suspension of their commercial shellfish license and depuration permit.

CPO Klitz conducted an evening patrol in Barnegat Light where, just prior to dark, he observed a recreational fishing vessel returning to the municipal ramp. Upon inspection, the fishermen claimed they had three legal-sized striped bass located in a rear hatch of the vessel. CPO Klitz noticed the fishermen appeared nervous and eager to end the inspection. CPO Klitz located the three striped bass and began inspecting additional compartments on the vessel. Located in a live-well under the seat were an additional 19 striped bass, filling the live-well to capacity. Summonses were issued for 19 striped bass over the daily limit, seven undersized striped bass, and two oversized striped bass. The defendant plead guilty to possessing 19 striped bass over the daily limit for a total penalty of \$1900.00.

Lieutenant Petruccelli charged a North Carolina commercial fishing vessel owner/operator after identifying violations against NJ's Possession in Excess of Daily Limit Vessel License. NJ's Possession in Excess of Daily Limit License allows commercial fishing vessels to enter NJ's ports with summer flounder and black sea bass that will eventually be landed in other states. The vessel must be properly licensed, and the excess fish must be lawfully landed and sold in the intended state. In this situation, the vessel operator landed a trip limit of NJ's summer flounder in Cape May and declared his intention for the excess summer flounder on board to be landed and sold in Virginia. When the vessel left NJ, however, it immediately transited to Massachusetts where it landed in New Bedford to gear up for scallop fishing. NJ CPOs contacted Massachusetts authorities who conducted an inspection of the vessel and determined the excess summer flounder was unlawfully filleted at sea and concealed in various places on board. The operator admitted to also discarding an additional amount of the excess summer flounder on the way into port. The vessel was also charged in Massachusetts for landing summer flounder without a permit and for filleting them at sea.