



## **BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION MONTHLY REPORT**

**Al Ivany, Chief**

**June 16 – July 15, 2024**

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

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

Hunter Education courses have concluded for the Spring 2024 season. Staff will begin to compile and analyze student data as well as update the FY24 final progress report for the federal grant. Classes for July and August were finalized and posted, and the first evening summer session course was held July 12 at the Northern Region Office. Thirty-seven firearm students graduated with an extremely promising 78-percent show rate.

Staff compiled volunteer hunter and trapper education instructor timesheets to provide required information for final grant reporting and began preparing new timesheets for instructors to record their hours/mileage for the upcoming grant period.

A new instructor timesheet was developed and modified during the report period to update and simplify the previous version.

Staff received 23 requests for duplicate Hunter Education cards. Three (3) individuals could not be located and were informed of how to obtain new ones. Of the 20 cards that were found, 35 separate discipline requests were processed. When handling duplicates, staff must research records to locate the information, add it to the hunter's profile and then email the individual directions on how to obtain duplicates.

Staff received 161 emails from constituents regarding hunter education related topics, 19 of which were non-residents applying to unlock their New Jersey hunting privileges Eight (8) were resident hunters who completed and submitted their requirements to unlock their rifle permits.

Staff handled 63 voicemails through the Hunter Education telephone line. Thirty-eight (38) percent of these were not related to Hunter Education. Twenty-seven percent concerned requests for duplicate Hunter Education cards and the remaining percentages follow: Miscellaneous Hunter Education calls: 14%, Live Fire Range Session Inquiries: 8%, Inquiries on Classes: 8%, Non-Resident Unlocks: 3%, and Rifle/Muzzleloader: 2%.

C. Venuti compiled hunter education attendee survey results and forwarded the information to J. Leskie to determine trends and areas to focus on for future programs. The results will be added to the final progress report for the Hunter Education federal grant.

### **Trapper Education**

No report.

### **Miscellaneous**

Staff reviewed and submitted the final draft of the 2024 Hunting and Trapping Digest. Edits and comments were then forwarded to L. DiPiano. The Digest is scheduled to be out in August.

K. Griglak updated PowerPoint presentations for the upcoming annual Hunter Orientation meetings in Montgomery and Hillsborough townships.

### **R3 Hunting and Shooting Sports Program (Joe Leskie, Tiffany Woolley, Courtney Venuti)**

Staff worked on finalizing the flyer and forms for the Waterfowl Hunting Workshop scheduled in late August at the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge. The workshop will be hosted by NJFW's R3 Hunting & Shooting Sports Program (R3HSSP) in partnership with Ducks Unlimited's Wallkill River Chapter and the Wallkill River NWR.

T. Woolley contacted Hunter Education Instructor and R3 Mentor R. Seborowski from the Fin, Fur & Feather Club of New Jersey on partnering with R3HSSP to schedule a program in late September. R3 staff will handle registration and promotion, while R. Seborowski and his club will handle workshop material and content. The program will be limited to 15 participants.

Staff are currently working on logistics for another Mentored Introduction to Small Game Hunting Workshop that will take place during the fall in the Central Region (possibly at the Assunpink WMA). This fall, a total of three Mentored Introduction to Small Game Hunting workshops will be conducted: two at the Pequest Trout Hatchery and the one previously mentioned in the Central Region (location to be determined). Staff will also continue to work on logistics for holding a workshop in the Southern Region.

### **R3 Tuckahoe Managed Waterfowl Hunt**

Staff have been editing the Tuckahoe Managed Waterfowl Hunt Program's Hunter Opinion Survey. Modifications included shortening the survey to retain participant engagement and eliminate fatigue. Changes also included removing broad, open-ended questions. The new survey has also been entered into Microsoft Forms which will allow hunters to scan a QR code after their hunt and complete the survey onsite.

Staff continue to work on the program's three-year analysis and continue to update last year's Tuckahoe Managed Waterfowl Hunt presentation. Staff are also continuing to prepare for the upcoming season as well as work on the logistics of planning the mentored hunts.

### **R3 Miscellaneous**

Staff continue to edit six predetermined topics for the *Hunt for Good* campaign with the NEAFWA R3 committee. Once all edits are made, the campaign will be posted on our social media and sent via GovDelivery emails.

Staff continues to work on a Hunting Resources Page that will be posted on our R3 website. This page will cover game species in New Jersey and offer information about hunting each of them. The objective is to provide new hunters with all the information they need to go into the field on their own.

Staff are continuing to work on creating a video walk-through for the Hunting and Trapping Explorer App to assist constituents with understanding how to utilize the tool. The video will cover the basics of using Explorer.

### **New Jersey NASP® Program (Joe Leskie, Craig Decker)**

Spring sessions have been completed. Staff are compiling final FY24 numbers for reporting on the federal grant.

Staff are contacting all active NJ NASP Basic Archery Instructors (BAI) to remind them of the deadline to report their school/organization activities. This procedure occurs annually at the close of the school year and completion is imperative for BAIs to maintain their certification. Several follow-up communications will be forthcoming up until the July 31 deadline.

Staff have been working with I&E personnel responsible for updating the NASP-related webpages and associated links on the NJFW website.

Staff continue to field communications with various schools and organizations inquiring about the NASP program and becoming certified.

Staff are currently updating the NASP instructor database.

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

### **Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center**

The Sedge Island season is in full swing with 11 groups participating in the program. The Sedge Island Field Experience was held during this reporting period for 13 middle school students. Students apply to attend this program and are selected through a rubric process. While it was very windy most of the time, students got to participate in a variety of activities culminating in a project presented on the last day.

A bulkhead design development meeting was attended onsite.

### **Trout in the Classroom (TIC)**

No updates.

### **Angler R3**

Two *Let's Go Fishing* workshops were scheduled during this reporting period. The first was held on June 28 at Ocean County Park in Lakewood for nine participants; the second, held on July 9 at Historic Batsto Village in Hammonton also had nine participants. Most of the registrants indicated that they were new or inexperienced anglers, while a few indicated they were looking to get back into the sport of fishing.

The *Let's Go Fishing* workshop scheduled for June 23 at Willingboro Lakes County Park was cancelled due to an excessive heat warning and has been rescheduled for August 11.

Upcoming *Let's Go Fishing* workshops are being planned for Laurel Acres Park in Mount Laurel on July 24; Willingboro Lakes County Park in Willingboro on August 11 (*rescheduled from June 23*); Ocean County Park in Lakewood on August 13; Thompson Park in Monroe Township on August 16; and Batsto Village in Hammonton on August 28.

*First Catch Center* workshops are being held at the Hackettstown State Fish Hatchery on July 19 (Family Fishing), July 27 (Family Fishing – two sessions) and August 26 (Women).

Staff provided a short presentation on Microsoft Teams to offer an update on the implementation progress of the Angler R3 Plan during its first year.

### **Education**

Staff exhibited at the following events:

- Ocean County Picnic Party (800 attendees)
- Sourland Mountain Festival (1,300 attendees)

Staff conducted a workshop for families at Princeton Market Fair entitled *Sustainability and Water* for 43 children and their parents.

Multiple projects are being planned for the upcoming school year, including a partnership with the State Museum, new auditorium and classroom workshops, and a continuation of our collaboration with climate education leaders across the country.

## **Other**

Six messages were drafted and sent to various e-mail lists promoting education programs and workshops.

Staff provided a day of activities for the first week of the DEP Youth Inclusion Initiative at Island Beach State Park. Youth from two groups (Newark and Garfield) participated in salt marsh exploration using kayaks, and beach ecology with a sea level rise sand building challenge.

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

### **Pequest Natural Resource Education Center**

Eight group programs were given this reporting period for 107 students. Programs included: Fishing Basics (50); Senior Fishing (12); Hatchery Tour and Trout Games (25); and Hatchery Tour/Trout Habitat Hike (20). The DEP Youth Inclusion Initiative hosted groups from Newark and Garfield for a fishing education program at the pond.

Pequest also offered public programs this month: Intermediate Fly Casting; Conservation Dogs; Family Fishing Basics; Fly Fishing Boot Camp; Introduction to Fly Fishing for Bass; Introduction to Bass Fishing Seminar; Reading the Water; and a Hatchery Tour. A total of 78 people participated in these programs.

The facility was used by two groups to conduct their own programs. The Bureau of Law Enforcement used the pond and Trout Unlimited hosted their quarterly meeting.

### **Mobile Education Trailer (MET)**

The MET has been added to the Event Calendar on our website to promote where it will be throughout the year.

The trailer is currently scheduled for the following events:

- July 16-20, 2024 – Burlington County Farm Fair
- July 27- August 3 – Warren County Farmers' Fair
- August 6 – National Night Out, Allaire State Park
- August 21-25, 2024 – Hunterdon County 4H & Agricultural Fair

## **Hooked on Fishing - Not on Drugs (HOFNOD) Program**

A Sisters Afield program was held on June 21-23 at the Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center. Three families (8 individuals) participated. Students enjoyed kayaking while exploring salt marsh ecology, learning about Northern Diamondback Terrapins, clamming, fishing and more. The weekend weather was perfect, and both the sunrise and sunset were spectacular.

Staff co-hosted a youth fishing event in partnership with the Lake Hopatcong Elks Club at Lake Hopatcong State Park. The youth committee held the event as a Father's Day celebration with 12 participants in attendance.

Staff hosted alternative high school students at the Hackettstown State Fish Hatchery for a half day of fishing. Unfortunately, the group had a notable number of no-shows, with only three students attending. Those who did attend, however, enjoyed a great day with a tour of the facility and fishing at the education pond.

## **WEBSITE ACTIVITY (Doug Rizio)**

No report. The tool used for collecting data analytics is still experiencing issues. Reports will be updated as soon as the situation is resolved.

## **WILDLIFE INFORMATION/PUBLIC OUTREACH (Linda DiPiano)**

### **GovDelivery (Listserv) Messages**

Seven (7) email messages were drafted and sent to various e-mail lists and outdoor writers. Assistance was provided to staff with six (6) additional messages.

1. ATTENTION: Deer Hunters! (6/17/24)
2. NJDEP Fish & Wildlife Launches Summer of CHANJ Campaign To Highlight Importance of Enhancing Habitat Connectivity (6/27/24)
3. Wild Turkey Brood Sighting Survey (7/1/24)
4. Pequest WMA Kenco Parking Lot Closure (7/3/24)
5. Butterflies, Bobcats and the Summer of CHANJ (7/5/24)
6. Support Clinton WMA (7/9/24)
7. National Trapper Survey (7/15/24)

### **GovDelivery List Numbers to Date**

		7/1/2024
Freshwater Fishing		63561

Hunting		44319
Marine Fishing		59814
Wildlife		41752
Education		36775
Endangered Species		32954
Shellfish		39395
Outdoors		46788
Sparta Mt.		28467
CHANJ		32894
Marine CARES Act Information		17500
Marine Fisheries Grant and Assistance Information		4885
Total		<b>449104</b>

### **Responses to the Public Email Address**

Approximately 187 emails came to the public email address. All were directly responded to or forwarded to agency staff for response; all others required no response.

### **Outstanding Deer Program**

To date, 13 applications have been received for the 2025 Deer Classic.

The application deadline has been extended to December 1 as the Deer Classic will take place on April 26, 2025. It will occur during the New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs Annual Convention and Sportsman's Jamboree at the Gloucester County Dream Park in Logan Township.

### **Hunting and Trapping Digest**

Received the fourth pass edits back from bureau staff on June 24. They were reviewed and uploaded to the publisher on June 27.

Received the fifth pass back from the publisher on July 11 and immediately sent it to Wildlife, Lands, Law, Licensing, and Hunter Education staff with a due date for edits of July 16.

### **Wildlife Conservation Corps**

The Wildlife Conservation Corps now has 4,834 members.

There were no volunteer opportunities available during this reporting period.

### **Other**

- Attended the Supervisor Web Portal Introduction meeting
- Began working on the new five-year federal Outreach Grant with the NJFW Federal Grants Coordinator
- Attended a planning meeting for the 2025 Youth Fishing Challenge's 10-year Celebration
- Attended an Angler R3 Plan Update meeting
- Attended a Sedge Island Bulkhead meeting

## **WILDLIFE INFORMATION – INTERNAL COMMUNICATION (Kathy Porutski)**

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

Passing of Retired Wildlife Biologist Bob Eriksen's Wife Sue  
 REMINDER - Cindy Fratti Retirement Collection - Due 6/24  
 Passing of Retired BLM Northern Region Superintendent Bob Olsen's Daughter  
 NOV Posting - NJFW (Secretarial Assistant 3 - Non-Stenographic)  
 CRO Back Up & Running (previous message was sent by Chief Ivany on 6/28)  
 Save the Date ~ NJFW Staff Day at Island Beach State Park September 19 (**DRAFTED**)  
 June Bureau Reports  
 Passing of Retired BLE Chief Tim Cussen's Wife  
 NOV Posting - NJFW (Manager 2 Environmental Protection)  
 Retirement Collection for BLM's Steve Dobrosky

**Also, during this reporting period:** the Bureau of Information and Education's Monthly Report for June was compiled and edited; a retirement flier was designed for BLM's Steve Dobrosky; instructions on updating an email signature were forwarded to the Bureau of Law Enforcement; an inquiry regarding a mounted former state record fish was referred to the chief for possible acquisition; information on a Celebration of Life event for retired Rutgers professor Dr. Doug Applegate was forwarded to former Division Director Larry Herrighty; and several hours were spent on the Annual Cybersecurity Awareness Training (it contains 20 intensive modules; to date, 2/3 of the course has been completed). In addition, editing on the FY24 Annual Report has begun. Thus far, the Bureau of Wildlife Management and the Bureau of Land Management have been completed. The publication cover was also designed.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Jonathan Carlucci)**

### **Publications/Graphics**

- Video animation and development methods were explored.
- Hard disk drive on graphics machine replaced and operational drives fused, operating system installed, restored, and libraries being rebuilt



- QR codes created in Adobe for program support
- Business card created for staff
- Logos modified and converted to vector as requested by staff
- CHANJ logo modified in several iterations for DEP communications staff - summer theme
- Images acquired from stock source through our DOIT contact for use in publications

### **Photography/Videography**

- Mercer County Wildlife Center footage of Alleghany Wood Rat (AWR) treatment and x-ray
- Palisades Park site footage, multi-camera coverage of AWR release and staff interview
- Shell Recycling Program and Nacote Creek visit, river views and footage of planting
- American Oystercatcher located in Stone Harbor Natural Area with ENSP staff, footage and interview
- Review and upload of AWR footage and stills
- Review and upload of Stone Harbor footage
- Atlantic City site visit, footage of restaurant operations, dining, and signage taken for shell recycling video project
- Riverside Shells of Port Norris site visit, footage for video production
- Millville WMA area footage for WMA of the month future production
- Footage from several sites shared directly with video producer
- Project footage pulled from iCloud, reviewed and placed on One Drive for staff access
- Total review and upload of 36 GB of footage and stills shared with video producer and I&E staff

### **Meetings/Training**

Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) meeting

Outreach Group meetings

Monthly flight training

### **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Matt Hencheck)**

- *Winslow WMA of the Month* promotional video – Filmed many of the scenic landscapes and archery range at the Winslow Wildlife Management Area. This video is part of the WMA of the Month video series.
- *Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) Shell Recycling Program* video – M. Hencheck filmed and produced a video on the Shell Recycling Program featuring NJDEP Commissioner Shawn LaTourette as he visited the site with NJFW Marine Resources

staff. The video highlights this popular program and has been submitted for the ECOS State Innovation Competition in August.

- *Shell Recycling Program Update* video promotion – M. Hencheck filmed and produced a short video with the program’s coordinator, Biologist Scott Stueber. This video offers updates on the program, including a \$1.27 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), new equipment obtained to better assist in planting shell, public shell drop-off locations, additional restaurant partners, and the development of a marine science education program in Atlantic City schools.
- *Shell Recycling Program Atlantic City Aquarium* video – This short video will highlight the overall recycling process from ordering oysters in a restaurant, to staff picking up the shells weekly and curing them, to planting them off the new barge and back into the local oyster reef population. This is 90-second video with footage and titles to be displayed at the Atlantic City Aquarium later this summer.
- *Chinese Pond Mussel Survey* video – This project was filmed and has been in the editing stages since May. Additional filming will continue this summer with plans to post the final video to social media by later summer.
- *Delaware Bay Shell Planting Program* video – This will be an in-depth video highlighting the entire Delaware Bay Shell Planting program. Principal photography has just begun, capturing the loading and planting of shells in Delaware Bay. Additional interviews and footage will be filmed this summer. The video is intended for posting this fall.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA (Katie Paey)**

### **Facebook**

The NJFW Facebook (FB) page had **50,533 followers** at the end of this reporting period.

A total of **30** 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: Go Fish Fridays, NASP Instructor receives recognition, National Pollinator Week – bee swarm, Conservation Dogs program, National Go Fishing Day, Coastal Barn Owl project, Pine Barrens butterflies, piebald deer, Black Rail survey, Summer of CHANJ campaign content, Black Bear Safety Week content, Independence Day, Shell Recycling Program updates, Shark Week, Clinton WMA of the Month, Employment Opportunity, DMZ 45 and 46 closure, shark fishing regulations, and Turkey Brood Survey.

**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):

**7/5** – Black Bear Safety Week: Day 5 – reached **104,934** people, **2,838** engagements

Staff continue 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 **17,175 followers** at the end of this reporting period.

The total organic reach of the NJFW Instagram page during this reporting period was 12,704 people.

A total of **27** Instagram posts were posted this period. Posts include photographs and video taken by staff, and graphic pieces created for promotions.

Post topics included: Go Fish Fridays, NASP Instructor receives recognition, National Pollinator Week – bee swarm, National Go Fishing Day, Coastal Barn Owl project, Pine Barrens butterflies, piebald deer, Black Rail survey, Summer of CHANJ campaign content, Black Bear Safety Week content, Independence Day, Shell Recycling Program updates, Shark Week, Clinton WMA of the Month, DMZ 45 and 46 closure, and Turkey Brood Survey.

**Two (2)** Instagram stories were posted this period. Topics included: Employment opportunity and Shell Recycling Program.

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 post with the most reach this period** –

**7/15** – Shell Recycling Program Update Reel – reached **4,203** people with **353** 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.
- Information from the Social Media/GovDelivery content calendar was composed into weekly updates and sent to outreach and R3 staff.
- Graphics were created for use on social media.

- Photos were edited for use on social media.
- Biweekly Outreach Group meetings were attended.
- WMA of the Month content was created for use on the Website, GovDelivery emails and social media as well as shared with appropriate staff for distribution.
- An Angler R3 Program update meeting was attended on June 19.
- Photos were taken of the Clinton Wildlife Management Area, uploaded to OneDrive and shared with staff.

## **OUTREACH (Michelle Smith)**

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.

A Summer of CHANJ promotional campaign was developed and is being spearheaded by the CHANJ team and Outreach Group to educate the public about the initiative. The first promotional messages went out via social media, GovDelivery, the agency website and DEP's Office of Local Government Assistance. Promotional messages will continue to be developed and posted throughout the summer months.

NJFW's FY2024 black bear multi-media outreach campaign continued the marketing pulse to coincide with the summer bear activity period. An additional marketing pulse will take place this fall. Millions of residents will be reached in their homes and on their mobile devices with bear safety information.

A candidate was offered the Bear Outreach Program's program specialist trainee position and is anticipated to start in late July.

Bulk quantities of bear outreach materials were distributed upon request.

## **Other**

A meeting was attended for the Bureau of Law Enforcement's Conservation Police Internship project presentations. Ideas were explored to improve the Bureau's social media presence and relevance to young adults.

A meeting on the Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Outreach Grant was attended to discuss the new 5-year grant application as well as utilizing current remaining funds.