



BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION MONTHLY REPORT

Al Ivany, Chief

September 16 – October 15, 2024

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

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

During this reporting period, 12 hunter education classes were held statewide for 893 students. During those classes, 404 students completed bow hunter education, and 489 students completed firearm hunter education. Staff will continue to post classes up to the middle of November, which will be the end of courses for the year.

Staff received a total of 165 voicemails. Most of the calls (22%) were for other departments. The next highest percentage of calls (19%) were requests for duplicate Hunter Education cards. The 3rd highest subject matter for calls was tied at 16% regarding live fire range sessions and miscellaneous Hunter Education calls. The remaining percentages are as follows: 15% non-resident unlock requests, 6% questions about classes, 5% Trapper Education, and 1% for rifle/muzzleloader unlocks.

Staff received 73 requests for duplicate Hunter Education cards. A total of 131 individual disciplines were successfully located, but 10 were unable to be found. Staff request information from the constituent that is then used to locate records in an Access file. If records are located, they are added to the profile and instructions on how to obtain the card are then emailed out. If records cannot be located (usually due to date of completion; records before 1986 are incomplete), instructions on how to proceed with Hunter Education to obtain a new card are emailed out.

Staff processed 586 emails from the public on the general hunter education email address. Included in those emails were 80 non-resident hunting license unlock requests, and 18 rifle permit unlock requests.

Trapper Education

A total of 26 students completed Trapper Education at the Hackettstown Hatchery during this report period where instructor support was extremely high. Eight raccoons, an opossum and a red fox were trapped. A new trapper education trailer to store all equipment has made setting up the classes easier and more efficient.

S. Forlenza attended the New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs' Trapping Committee Meeting at the Assunpink Conservation Center, where current trapping issues and concerns were discussed to determine potential solutions.

Miscellaneous

J. Leskie prepared and presented a Non-Lead Partnership update for the October 8, 2024, Fish and Game Joint Council meeting with the Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee. Updates to this year's programs and initiatives were discussed.

Hunter Education staff attended the Agency Day portion of the Non-Lead Partnership workshop along with staff from the Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge and the Peregrine Fund on October 11 at the Wallkill NWR in Sussex County.

Hunter Education staff have been assisting with planning and logistics for the upcoming 2024 Take a Kid Youth Pheasant Hunt on Saturday, November 2, 2024. Over 200 youth hunters are anticipated to participate in this annual program.

K. Griglak was a virtual guest lecturer for undergraduate students taking the *Hunting and Foraging in Modernity* class at Queens College in NYC. The students learned about locavores and the history of hunting in the United States.

Staff have been preparing and scouting with several mentors for this year's annual R3 Mentored Squirrel Hunting Program. The Clinton WMA has been chosen for the Northern Region site where five mentors will be mentoring 10 participants. This promises to be another great program this year.

K. Griglak attended the Warren County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs' monthly meeting.

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

R3 staff partnered with Hunters Helping the Hungry (HHH), Bringhurst Meats in Berlin, Camden County and The Buck Stop in Elmer, Salem County for two deer butchering workshops. There were over 200 applications submitted with limited space available for each workshop. A

total of 49 participants attended both workshops where they were given the tools needed to process their own harvested deer this season.

A survey was sent to all participants with 38 individuals responding. According to the results, 97% said the skinning portion of the workshop was excellent with 92% thoroughly enjoying the butchering portion. After the workshop 58% stated that they are ready to process their own harvested deer while 39% would like a little more time, but were willing to try. Everyone (100%) said the program was very informative and that they would recommend it to others. Two other butchering workshops are being planned in North Jersey this fall and winter.

The Women's Introduction to Shooting Sporting Clays Workshop took place at Freehold Fin, Fur and Feather Sportsmen's Club of New Jersey with nine women in attendance. The participants had an opportunity of shooting a sporting clays course with experienced instructors. After the workshop, a survey was sent out with six participants responding. An analysis concluded that 100% thought the information provided was very informative, 33% were ready to shoot sporting clays on their own, and 67% would like a little more time, but were willing to try. All participants would recommend this program to others.

Staff completed the registration and selection process for two mentored squirrel hunts. Thirty-five individuals applied for 18 available spots. The first hunt will take place on Friday, October 18, 2024, at the Clinton WMA. The second is scheduled for Wednesday, October 30, 2024, at Assunpink WMA. The 18 participants selected were sent an Intro to Squirrel Hunting video and are required to watch it prior to the Virtual Squirrel Hunting Meeting that will take place on Wednesday, October 16, 2024. During the virtual meeting participants will be able to ask questions and meet the mentors prior to their hunt. Staff will also review logistics for the day of their hunt.

R3 Tuckahoe Managed Waterfowl Hunt

The 2024 Tuckahoe Managed Waterfowl Hunt Lottery application period (September 1-25, 2024) ended. There are six designated hunting blinds available by application and a random lottery. A total of 546 applications were received.

Staff attended the 2024 Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Managed Waterfowl Hunt Open House at the Tuckahoe WMA. This two-day event was an opportunity for hunters who won a blind in the 2024 lottery to visit the WMA and become familiar with what to expect prior to their hunt day. Attendees were able to view the parking and entrance areas for their awarded blinds. Individuals also had the option of seeing the actual blind they were awarded. Providing all of this information beforehand will help to improve the experience of the hunter on the day of their hunt. Staff were also available to answer questions, show examples of the decoys available and offer an idea of what the day would be like. A total of 56 hunters attended.

J. Leskie, T. Woolley, C. Venuti, and J. Belfi completed impoundment blind maintenance for the Tuckahoe Managed Waterfowl Hunt prior to Youth Waterfowl Day on October 12, 2024.

This year, Youth Day participants were selected through a separate application which allowed young hunters who were unaware of the Tuckahoe Managed Waterfowl Hunting Program to apply for and experience a true early season waterfowl hunting experience. Five youth hunters participated and harvested four Green Winged Teal. There was plenty of action and plenty of smiles to go around.

Additional supplies were ordered for the 2024 Tuckahoe Managed Waterfowl Hunt season. Specific to the order were hunting blind materials and supplies needed for marking directions, parking and paths to the hunting blinds. Signs were also constructed for the upcoming season.

R3 Take a Kid Pheasant Hunt

At the time of reporting, over 225 youth have applied for the 2024 Take A Kid Youth Pheasant Hunt scheduled for Saturday, November 2, 2024. In addition, more than 85 volunteers have applied to be mentors. Staff have been processing applications to confirm that all youth have successfully completed Hunter Education, obtained their youth firearm licenses and are within the age limits of this event. Staff are also reviewing mentor applications to confirm that all volunteers have completed R3 Mentor Training and associated paperwork.

R3 Miscellaneous

Staff attended the Non-Lead Ammunition Partnership presentation and demonstration on October 11, 2024, at the Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Sussex County. The initiative will apply to this hunting season at Wallkill NWR and discussions included information on non-lead as well as a prospective plan for hunters' ammunition rebates. Seven states have signed on to this pilot program with New Jersey being one of them.

J. Leskie finalized and submitted the FY24 R3 Federal Grant Performance Report. Summary results and analytics were included as required by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

J. Leskie conducted an interview for Rack and Fin Radio to discuss NJFW's upcoming R3 Take-a-Kid Pheasant Hunt and the values of fostering such a program.

T. Woolley attended one Fish & Wildlife Experience session for new employees. This report period included the Bureau of Marine Habitat and Shellfisheries and introduced employees to oyster dredging.

NASP® (Joe Leskie, Craig Decker)

Staff conducted a site visit to evaluate range and equipment conditions as well as a hands-on bow maintenance training session at George Washington Middle (GWM) School in Ridgewood, Bergen County. Staff also conducted a NASP Basic Archery Instructor certification session where 10 teachers from GWM, Benjamin Franklin Elementary and Ridgewood High schools (all in the Ridgewood School System) were successfully certified. The new 2024-25 school season began in August and these individuals bring the number of teachers certified to approximately 22. The total number of new schools added to the program during the 2024-25 season is six.

C. Decker attended a North American Non-Lead Partnership workshop at Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge in Sussex County. It was a follow-up session to last year's workshop.

Staff worked with the Morris and Bergen county chapters of the NJ State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs in providing financial assistance to obtain the initial NJ NASP Standard Equipment Package for the Ezra L. Nolan School #40 in Jersey City.

Staff processed and approved NASP Easton Foundation grants for two existing schools. During the 2024-25 season, funding was provided to seven new schools and three existing ones for a year-to-date total of \$11,700.00 in grant monies earmarked specifically for NASP archery equipment purchases.

Staff is planning, coordinating, and scheduling upcoming Basic Archery Instructor Training/Certification sessions.

Staff continues to field communication with various schools and organizations inquiring about the NASP program and how to become certified along with providing assistance to existing schools and organizations.

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

Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center

An on-site final bulkhead design meeting was held at Sedge Island. Plans will be finalized, and the necessary permits are being obtained.

The Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science had their freshman students and oceanography students participate in a Sedge Island program. Groups are now done for the season and staff will be planning volunteer maintenance days to close the facility for the winter.

Trout in the Classroom (TIC)

A total of 107 teachers are registered this year, which is a decline from last year. However, 17 new teachers have joined the program. Each educator received a customized water recommendation based on their registration form. Staff hopes that by narrowing down issues that are already present *before* eggs arrive, that the survival rate may increase.

Teachers also receive a personal water data testing sheet to immediately let them know if their tank is healthy or if there are water quality issues that must be addressed.

The Activity and Tank Care guides were changed to digital format this year.

Egg Day, the day when Trout Unlimited volunteers deliver eggs to all participating schools, is approaching. Fish food was packed for all the schools in anticipation of this day. Along with the eggs, the teachers are provided with three different sizes of fish food which should feed the fish for the entire year.

Angler R3

A *First Catch Center* women's fishing workshop was held on October 6 for six women. Four of them had indicated on their registration form that they described themselves as "new/inexperienced angler," while two indicated that they "used to fish and would like to get back into it."

A *Community Fishing Meetup* is being planned for October 19 (Free Fishing Day) at Roosevelt Park in Edison (Middlesex County). Staff and volunteers will provide bait, loaner rods and reels and offer assistance to anglers.

An *Ice Fishing Seminar* is being planned for November 16, with the intent that participants will have the opportunity to learn about ice fishing safety and tactics prior to any potential ice conditions. The seminar will be held at Morris County Library in Whippany.

Staff continues to work on new angler resources, including a *Guide to Freshwater Fishing in New Jersey*. The goal of these resources is to provide new anglers with information they need to fish on their own and to provide post-workshop information as support for participants who attend any of the fishing education programs.

Introductory fishing videos were finalized and uploaded to Fish & Wildlife's YouTube Channel. These videos will also be placed on the New Angler Resources webpage.

Education

Staff exhibited at West Windsor Community Day on September 21, the Delaware Riverfest on the 28th and the EarthShare Fair on October 13.

A presentation was given at the Cambridge School for high school students on September 30.

Meetings were attended with the NJ Envirothon planning committee and the NJ Commission on Environmental Education.

Other

Staff attended a Green Eggs and Sand planning meeting. New Jersey will be hosting the workshop next year at the Wetlands Institute on May 3-4, 2025.

WILDLIFE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH (Karen Byrne, Jessica Griglak, Liz Jackson, Adam Pollinger)

Pequest Natural Resource Education Center

Five group programs were held this reporting period for a total of 100 participants. Programs included two Fishing Basics (50 people), one Trout Habitat Hike and Fishing Basics (12 people), one Tour and Fishing Basics (35 people) and one Senior Fishing (3 people).

Pequest also offered public programs, including Intermediate Fly Casting, Introduction to New Jersey Trout Fishing, Women's Introduction to Fly Fishing Boot Camp and Fly Fishing Boot Camp. A total of 25 people participated in each program.

The facility was used by two groups to conduct their own programs: Hunter Education (held two classes) and Hooked on Fishing (used the pond).

Mobile Education Trailer (MET)

During this reporting period, the MET was staffed and featured at the 42nd Old Time Barnegat Bay Decoy and Gunning Show on September 28-29 with 1,028 people walking through. The trailer was also staffed at the Bedminster Fall Fest, October 12 with 578 visitors passing through it.

Fall dates are currently being scheduled for the MET including:

- Jordan School event, October 18
- Batsto Living History Fair, October 20
- League of Municipalities, November 19-21

Hooked on Fishing - Not on Drugs (HOFNOD) Program

Staff held a Team Leader Training on October 12, 2024, at the Hackettstown State Fish Hatchery. Content covered ecological awareness, wildlife interdependence, angling skills, fish anatomy and dissection as well as special hands-on content.

Staff is hosting the HOF Weekend Career Immersion (WCI) November 8-10, 2024, at the New Jersey School of Conservation in Stokes State Forest for students in grades 7 through 12. The weekend will have staff from various bureaus highlighting their NJ Fish & Wildlife career through lectures, demonstrations and hands-on activities.

The Belleville High School HOFNOD Team visited Pequest for a fishing trip. Twenty youth and five teachers enjoyed the beautiful weather, and students relished the experience of catching and releasing fish.

WEBSITE ACTIVITY (Doug Rizio)

New and Updated Pages, Images, and Documents

Three news updates were posted in September.

One job opening was also published.

Six new pages were created, while two additional pages were deleted or consolidated into other pages.

Additionally, 29 event posts were updated or edited during the report period.

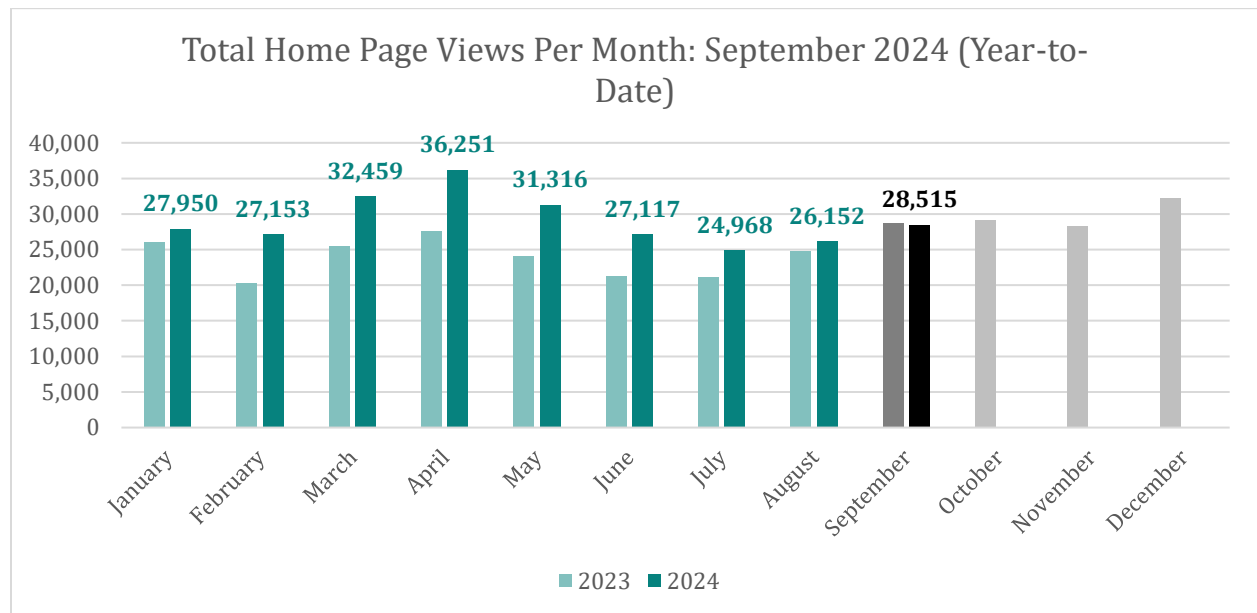
Approximately 65 pages were revised/updated throughout this duration.

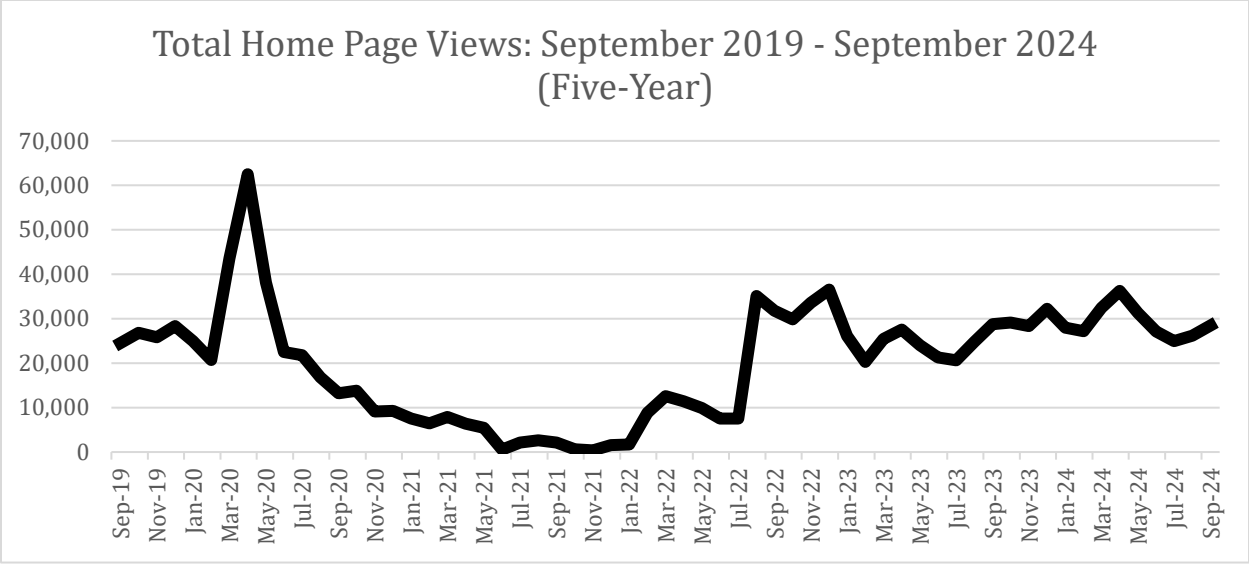
Approximately 55 documents were edited in or converted to PDF or DOC format. These included: Bureau Reports (9) in one .zip file; Meeting Documents (13) in one .zip file; Minutes/Notices/Agendas (18); Job Descriptions (1); and others (14).

A total of 39 images and two videos were also edited and posted.

Analytics – Home Page

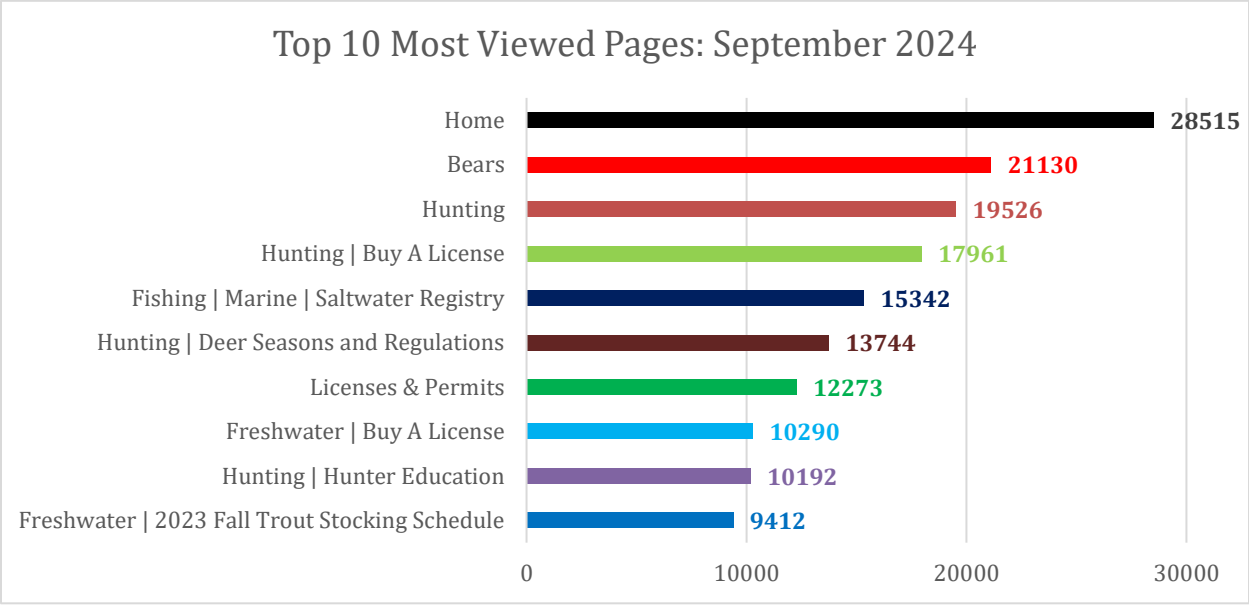
The number of views on the home page in September was 28,515; an average of about 951 views per day. It is an increase of 2,363 views from the previous month of August (26,152) and a decrease of 262 views from September of the previous year (28,777).



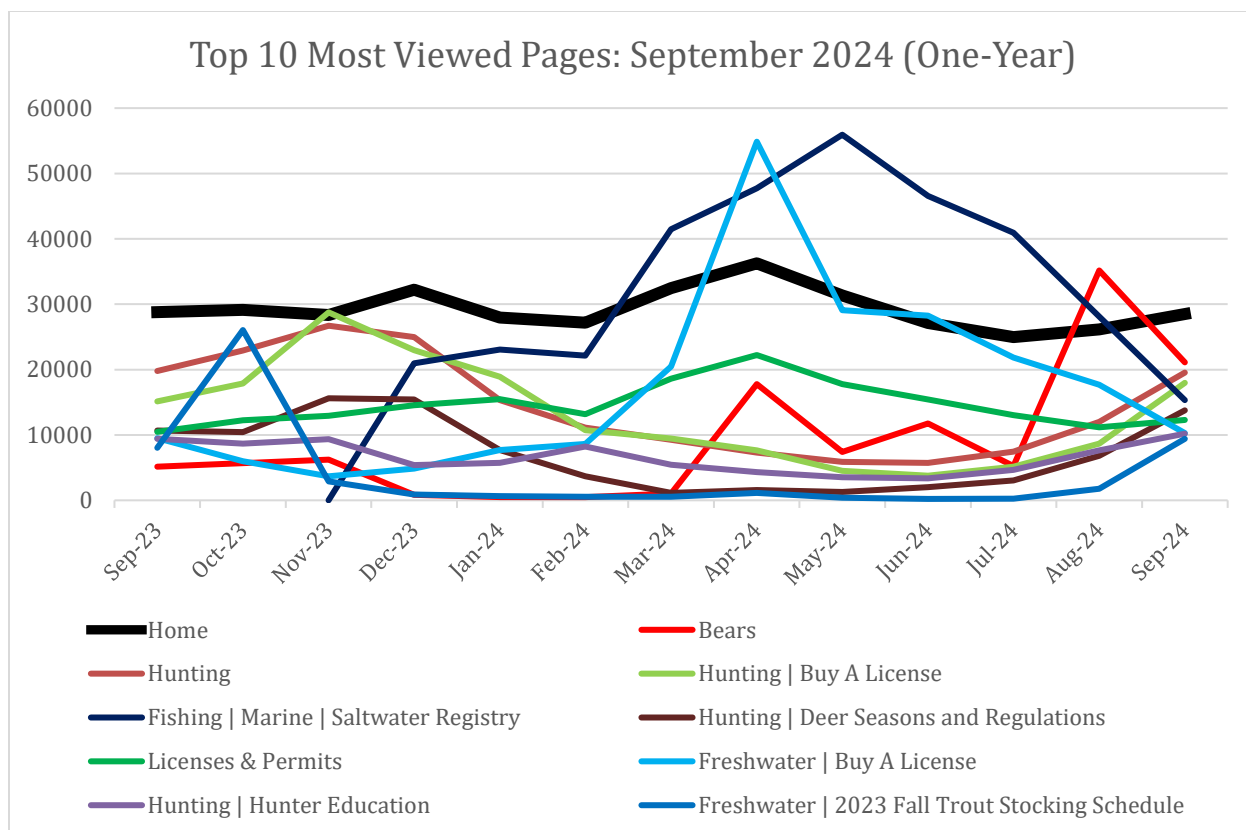


Analytics

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



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



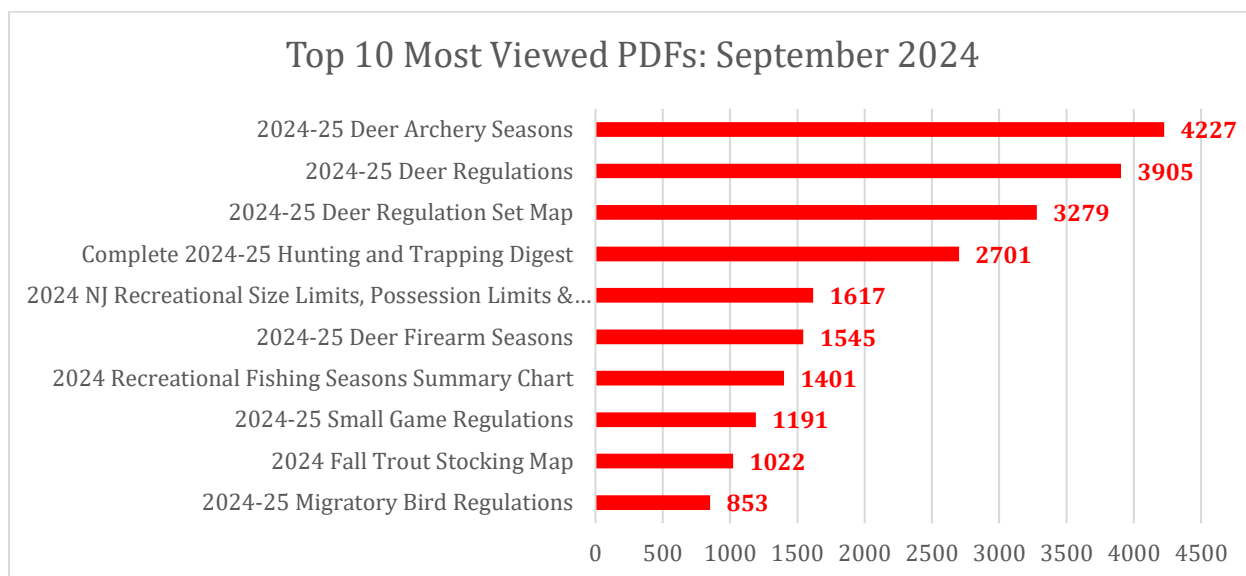
Rank	Page Name	Views
1	Home	28,515
2	Bears	21,130
3	Hunting	19,526
4	Hunting Buy A License	17,961
5	Fishing Marine Saltwater Registry	15,342
6	Hunting Deer Seasons and Regulations	13,744
7	Licenses & Permits	12,273
8	Freshwater Buy A License	10,290
9	Hunting Hunter Education	10,192
10	Freshwater 2023 Fall Trout Stocking Schedule	9,412

Other popular pages on the website were:

Rank	Page Name	Views
11	Fishing	9,335
12	Hunting and Trapping Digest	7,907
13	Fishing & Hunting License & Permit Information	7,592
14	Hunting Automated Harvest Report System	7,007
15	Marine Seasons & Regulations	5,565

16	Marine	4,527
17	Freshwater Places to Fish - Ponds, Lakes, and Reservoirs	4,515
18	Freshwater Fall Trout Fishing in New Jersey	4,293
19	Marine Seafood & Fishing Adventures in NJ	4,149
20	Bears Bear Hunting Season Information	3,930

The ten most requested PDFs this report period were:



Rank	PDF Name	Views
1	2024-25 Deer Archery Seasons	4,227
2	2024-25 Deer Regulations	3,905
3	2024-25 Deer Regulation Set Map	3,279
4	Complete 2024-25 Hunting and Trapping Digest	2,701
5	2024 NJ Recreational Size Limits, Possession Limits & Seasons	1,617
6	2024-25 Deer Firearm Seasons	1,545
7	2024 Recreational Fishing Seasons Summary Chart	1,401
8	2024-25 Small Game Regulations	1,191
9	2024 Fall Trout Stocking Map	1,022
10	2024-25 Migratory Bird Regulations	853

Additional Activities

Additional activities included bi-weekly Outreach Group meetings, work on the new Video section of the website, and Commissioner's Updates.

WILDLIFE INFORMATION/PUBLIC OUTREACH (Linda DiPiano)

GovDelivery (Listserv) Messages

Nineteen (19) email messages were drafted and sent to various e-mail lists and outdoor writers. Assistance was provided to staff with four (4) additional messages.

1. Fall Youth Hunting Days (9/16/24)
2. Support Wildcat Ridge WMA (9/17/24)
3. Tuckahoe Application Deadline Approaching! Submit Today! (9/19/24)
4. Become a Proud Wildlife Habitat Supporter! (9/23/24)
5. Fall Bow Opens Saturday In All Zones (9/24/24)
6. DEP Reminds Public to Secure Trash and Other Potential Food Sources as Bears Become More Active Ahead of Denning Season (9/25/24)
7. Get Ready For Pheasants! Dog Training Areas Stocked in October (9/26/24)
8. National Hunting & Fishing Day (9/28/24)
9. Summer of CHANJ 🌻 Winds Down (9/30/24)
10. Youth Waterfowl Hunt Days in October (10/1/24)
11. Let's Get Nuts This Fall! (10/2/24)
12. Interested in Trying Non-lead Ammunition? (10/3/24)
13. Fall Trout Stocking Delayed (10/4/24)
14. Beaver/Otter Trapping Information (10/7/24)
15. 2024 NJ Bear Hunt Begins Monday 10/14 (10/8/24)
16. 2024 Youth Pheasant Hunt Registration Deadline Approaching (10/10/24)
17. Summer of CHANJ Wraps Up 🌻 Safeguarding Spaces (10/11/24)
18. Award Winning CHANJ Program! (10/14/24)
19. Support Stafford Forge WMA (10/15/24)

GovDelivery List Numbers to Date

	10/1/2024
Freshwater Fishing	63225
Hunting	44272
Marine Fishing	59503
Wildlife	41306
Education	36391
Endangered Species	32646
Shellfish	38980
Outdoors	46841
Sparta Mt.	28233
CHANJ	32601
Marine CARES Act Information	17480

Marine Fisheries Grant and Assistance Information		5099
Total		446577

Responses to the Public Email Address

The responsibility of answering public inquiries is now being shared with K. Porutski.

Approximately **238** email messages came into the public email address. All were directly responded to or forwarded to agency staff for response. A small percentage (i.e., unsolicited advertisements, etc.) required no response.

Outstanding Deer Program

Twenty-five (25) applications (16 adults and 7 youth in 11 categories) have been received for the 2025 Deer Classic. One adult and one youth have applied for two categories.

All applicants have been informed by email that their applications have been received and that they will receive more information after the application deadline, and the scores have been ranked.

The application deadline has been extended from November 1 to December 1.

The Deer Classic will occur on April 26, 2025, during the NJ State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs Annual Convention and Sportsman's Jamboree at the Gloucester County Dream Park in Logan Township.

Freshwater Fishing Digest

The first pass of the digest was received back from the publisher on September 18, and immediately sent to Freshwater Fisheries staff with a due date of September 27.

First-pass edits were received from Freshwater Fisheries on September 27. All edits were reviewed and uploaded to the publisher on September 30.

The second pass of the digest was received back from the publisher on October 8, and immediately sent to Freshwater Fisheries staff with a due date of October 16.

Wildlife Conservation Corps

The Wildlife Conservation Corps now has 4,870 members.

There were no volunteer opportunities available during this reporting period.

Other

Attended the State NJSFSC meeting to discuss restructuring the Agency Representative program.

Attended the October Joint Fish and Game Council meeting.

Attended the Non-Lead Ammunition Workshop for agency members at the Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge.

WILDLIFE INFORMATION – INTERNAL COMMUNICATION (Kathy Porutski)

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

F&W Staff Day - Weather Decision Tomorrow
Message from AC Golden - NJF&W Staff Day Canceled
Retirement Collection for Waterfowl Biologist Ted Nichols
Looking for the Person Who Drives SG40042
September Bureau Reports
NOV Reposting - NJFW (Heavy Equipment Operator) Sent 10/9
Turtle Conservancy & ENSP Partner to Repatriate Illegally Trafficked Box Turtles
Passing of NJ Outdoor Writer Jim Stabile
Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ) Project Wins Regional Award!
NOV - F&W-2024-23 (Heavy Equipment Operator) Re-sent 10/17

Responses to the Public Email Address

Staff has been sharing the responsibility of answering public inquiries with L. DiPiano.

As stated earlier, approximately **238** email messages came into the public email address. All were directly responded to or forwarded to agency staff for response. A small percentage (i.e., unsolicited advertisements, etc.) required no response.

The majority of questions during this reporting period focused on law enforcement issues and regulations.

Annual Report

Editing on the FY24 Annual Report was completed. It was submitted to Chief Ivany on 10/4/24.

Other

The Bureau of Information and Education's Monthly Report for September was compiled and edited.

New employees were added to the IC list.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Jonathan Carlucci)

Publications/Graphics

- Two new versions of bobcat art for WHSP created after reviews and feedback
- Turkey harvest stats info graphic made and shared for social and website
- Art modified for staff and video production
- CWD – Keep NJ CWD Free brochure extensive edits and QR code additions
- Communications reviews of publications requested
- NASP brochure review and asset evaluation
- Completed WHSP decal specs, TAP form, and print request for three quantities
- Business card art created, TAP form filled, and orders placed for two employees
- Chinese Pond Mussel - art created for multiple slides used in video production
- Keep NJ CWD Free brochure shared for staff reviews
- Follow up on several outstanding print requests with Treasury Print Shop
- Four QR codes created in Adobe for program support

Photography/Videography

- Added permissions and provided staff with access to OneDrive image folders
- Follow-up with Kurt Jaegers for One Drive impending storage limit
- Image searches for State Museum display
- Meeting with Maria Valenti – V: drive setup and OneDrive transition for new asset library
- Met ENSP staff at Fortescue WMA, Delaware Bay and kestrel sites for footage and content
- Assisted with staff video interviews for State Museum project
- Footage and stills taken of successional forest and nesting boxes
- Downloaded footage from cloud and camera sources and uploaded to share folder
- HOIS video reviews and feedback
- Reviewed multiple versions of Chinese Pond Mussel video and provided feedback to video producer
- Fall bat mist netting attended and assisted with setup, filmed, took stills and interviews for potential video piece
- Pollinator footage taken and uploaded to the shared drive
- Assisted with interview of ENSP staff for turtle release video
- Communicated with lead DEP pilot on new SOP and flight operations manual
- Footage and photos of Pinelands and WMAs for State Museum and F&W use
- Documented cliff swallow nest movement for bridge installation project

- Delaware Bay Finfish Trawl Survey attended; footage and stills taken
- Internal, press and communications requests for photographs fulfilled
- Total review and upload of 22 GB of footage and stills shared with video editor and I&E staff

Meetings/Training Attended

Staff Day meeting

ACI Board Zoom branding meeting

OIT storage procedures

Outreach Group Teams meetings

Monthly flight training

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Matt Hencheck)

Video Production

- *Stafford Forge WMA of the Month* promotional video – Filmed ground and drone footage of Stafford Forge Wildlife Management Area for the WMA of the Month promo. Each month, I&E’s video production team spotlights a different wildlife management area highlighting the landscapes and activities available for the public to enjoy. This video has been posted to NJFW’s social media platforms.
- *Chinese Pond Mussel Survey* video – This project is conducted annually to survey specified waterbodies for the invasive Chinese pond mussel. If found, the waters are treated to ensure that the species doesn’t spread. The documentary video has been ongoing for nearly six months with additional interviews and reshoots filmed over the summer and fall. The video is now complete and should post soon to social media.
- Delaware Bay Finfish Trawl Survey video – Marine Resources Administration and Shellfisheries staff were filmed on the Delaware Bay. A scheduled interview will be filmed in the coming weeks. This video is scheduled to post in early November.
- *Early Successional Habitat Initiative* video– Early successional habitat across New Jersey is disappearing at an alarming rate. In 1986, there was approximately 1,470,000 acres of early and mid-successional habitat across the state. In 2020, that number had dropped to 1,095,000 acres – a decline of more than 375,000 acres. The decrease is primarily due to development and natural succession, a natural process that changes the structure of a habitat over time. The I&E video team has been working with staff on producing a documentary of this initiative. Currently, interviews with key staff members from the Bureau of Land Management and the Endangered and Nongame Species

Program have been filmed. Several WMAs that include early successional habitat were also filmed. Project completion and postdate are slated for November.

- *NJ State Museum* video – The I&E video team has been selected to produce a variety of segments highlighting the Pinelands, Piedmont region, Delaware River and Bay, Atlantic Coast, Species of Success, and Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ) Project. We are currently conducting interviews with NJFW staff and filming the selected ecosystems. Production started months ago and will continue through this fall. The video will play on a loop at the NJ State Museum from April 2025 – April 2026.
- *Box Turtle Release* video – In August the video team filmed the release of 50 box turtles into the wild with ENSP zoologist Brian Zarate and partnering project members. These turtles were illegally collected and later confiscated by NJFW’s conservation police officers. The turtles were taken to a rehabilitation center where they remained for over a year. Prior to release, each individual was fitted with a transmitter attached to its shell. Additional filming took place this fall. This video is complete and should be posted later this month.

SOCIAL MEDIA (Katie Paey)

Facebook

The NJFW Facebook (FB) page had **52,214 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, Youth Day Archery, Royal Tern Bands, Pequest Egg Take, Hooked On Fishing Team Leader Training, fall black bear activity, Take A Kid Pheasant Hunting program, Wildlife Habitat Supporter Program (WHSP) Climate Week promo, Fall Bow deer season, National Estuaries Week, dog training area stocking, National Hunting and Fishing Day, Horseshoe Island update, Summer of CHANJ campaign content, Youth Waterfowl Hunting days, freshwater mussel surveys, Wallkill NWR workshop, fall trout stocking update, spring turkey hunting statistics, Stafford Forge WMA of the Month, Massachusetts Citizen Science Striped Bass Project, deer and motorists, the Bureau of Law Enforcement’s request for identifying a discarded boat, and the CHANJ award.

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):

10/10 – Motorists cautioned to watch for deer in roadways – reached **507,473** people, **22,423** engagements

10/4 – Fall trout stocking update – reached **204,051** people, **6,412** engagements

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

Instagram

The NJFW Instagram page had **18,606 followers** at the end of this reporting period.

The total organic reach of the NJFW Instagram page during this reporting period was 19,763 people.

A total of **26** 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, Summer of CHANJ campaign content, Youth Day Archery, Royal Tern Bands, Pequest Egg Take, fall black bear activity, Take A Kid Pheasant Hunting program, WHSP Climate Week promo, Fall Bow deer season, National Estuaries Week, dog training area stocking, National Hunting and Fishing Day, Horseshoe Island update, Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days, freshwater mussel surveys, fall trout stocking update, Stafford Forge WMA of the Month, Massachusetts Citizen Science Striped Bass Project, deer and motorists, the Bureau of Law Enforcement's request for identifying a discarded boat, and the CHANJ award.

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 –

10/10 – Bureau of Law Enforcement discarded boat request – reached **11,385** people with **564** interactions.

Staff monitored and responded to comments and private messages.

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 and Urchin Tracking Module (UTM) campaign links were created for use on the website, GovDelivery emails and social media as well as shared with appropriate staff for distribution.

- Google Analytics data was monitored for the WMA of the Month and Summer of CHANJ campaigns.
- Google Analytics data reports were generated for the webmaster for top clicks on the NJFW website and PDFs.
- The Summer of CHANJ campaign concluded during this reporting period.

OUTREACH GROUP (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.

New Jersey Fish and Wildlife's FY2024 black bear multi-media outreach campaign began its fall bear activity period pulse. Final campaign results will be provided once the pulse is completed.

A request for proposals was put together to solicit bids from marketing firm vendors to implement an FY25 Statewide Black Bear Multi-media Outreach campaign. Questions were fielded from several vendors planning to submit proposals for the job. Fish and Wildlife will contract with a marketing firm to begin the project in the spring 2025 with peak marketing coinciding with the spring, summer and fall bear activity periods. Millions of residents will be reached in their homes and on their mobile devices with bear safety information.

Price quotes were explored and obtained for several upcoming bear outreach purchases, including a new vehicle and computer equipment as well as various exhibit and presentation/display items.

PARs were completed for Outreach Group staff.

BLACK BEAR EDUCATION PROGRAM (Stephanie Getto)

Bear Literature Distribution

- Over 900 pieces of black bear safety literature were distributed to the following:
 - State land commissions (Millstone Scenic Byway, Somerset County)
 - Scouts (Sussex and Bergen counties)
 - Attendees of Chatham Sustainability Fair (Morris County)
 - Attendees of Earth Care Day (Middlesex County)
 - Water Supply Employees (Hunterdon and Passaic counties)

Literature Type	Amount Distributed
English Brochures	320
Spanish Brochures	10
Kids Activity Books	427
Camper Cards	180
Tyvek Signs	0
TOTAL	937

Bear Presentations and Exhibits

A total of three presentations and two exhibits spanning five counties were given, reaching over 800 people.

Program Type	Date	Location	Attendees
Exhibit	9/21/24	Chatham Sustainability Fair (Morris County)	150
Presentation	9/30/24	New Jersey Water Supply Authority (Hunterdon County)	43
Presentation	10/4/24	Cub Scouts Pack 71 (Bergen County)	40
Exhibit	10/12/24	Earth Cares Day (Middlesex County)	550
Presentation	10/15/24	North Jersey District Water Supply Commission (Passaic County)	40
TOTAL			823

Bear Lesson Plans

Staff continued to develop an original lesson plan to provide teachers with classroom activities about black bears in New Jersey.

Other

Staff worked to update education materials for the bear program, purchasing several new items and working with BWM Bear Project staff to enhance presentations and exhibits.

A police bear training was attended on October 9 at the Morris County Public Safety Training Academy.

An educational workshop hosted by the North American Non-Lead Partnership was attended on October 11 at the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge (Sussex County).

Staff attended two Fish and Wildlife Experience events for new employees.