



NJDEP Fish and Wildlife
Monthly Highlights
Bureau of Law Enforcement
September 21, 2024 to October 20, 2024

Frank Panico, Chief
Brian Scott, Deputy Chief
Douglas Applegate, Deputy Chief
Joseph Soell, Captain - Administration
Vacant, Lieutenant - Administration
Robert Driscoll, Lieutenant - Training

Northern Region (908) 735-8240
Joseph Kuechler, Captain
Jordan Holmes, Lieutenant (District 1)
Brice Paey, Lieutenant (District 2)
Hannah Koch, Agency Services Representative

Central Region (609) 259-2120
Linda Quirk, Captain
Andrew Riviello, Lieutenant (District 3)
Sean McManus, Lieutenant (District 4)
Mike Anselmo, Agency Services Representative

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
Vacant, 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 7,056.5 hours of duty (7,124.6 - 2023)
These hours are charged to the following categories of duty:

	2024	2023
Law Enforcement	5,213.4	5,495.8
Fishing	1,087.5	1,174.9
Marine Resources	1,081.8	1,209.7
Hunting	631.7	514.8
Deer Hunting	936.3	759.8
Trapping	4.6	12.1
Wildlife Mgt. Areas	405.2	312.3
NG & Endangered Species	14.2	26.1
Court	33.6	28.0
Regional Meetings	126.4	90.5
Pollution Investigation	57.6	20.1
Training	807.6	1,509.0
Other Law Enforcement	860.5	773.7
Administration	1,590.3	1,446.4
Fish Management	3.0	0.0

Wildlife Management	20.8	27.6
Information & Education	37.6	57.3
Bear Control	0.5	1.0
Bear Patrol & Invest	357.2	378.3

During patrols, officers performed 2424 field inspections (1 9 3 9 - 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>Total</u>	<u>2023</u>
Summonses Issued	41	41	36	155	273	234
Criminal Arrests	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warnings Issued	2	0	0	14	16	20
Bear Feeding Warns Issued	0	0	0	0	0	1

Field Inspections By Region

Northern Region	420
Central Region	277
Southern Region	274
Marine Region	1453
Total	2424

Field Inspections By Activity

Hunters	295
Freshwater Anglers	153
Trappers	0
Commercial Fishermen	5
Marine Rec. Anglers	1077
WMA non hunt/fish	199
Other	36

Listed below are the types of summonses issued:

	<u>North</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>Marine</u>
Fishing	7	2	0	0
Hunting	13	4	0	0
Waterfowl Hunting	0	0	0	0
Deer Hunting	8	2	8	0
Trapping	2	0	0	0
WMA	2	30	28	0
Striped Bass	1	0	0	0
Shellfish	0	0	0	4
Marine-Commercial	0	0	0	0
Marine-Recreational	5	0	0	150
Nongame & Exotic	0	0	0	0
Title 58	0	0	0	0
Title 39	0	2	0	0
Other	3	1	0	1
Bear Hunting	0	0	0	0
Bear Feeding	0	0	0	0
Marine Striped Bass	0	0	0	0
Title 2C	0	0	0	0
Totals	41	41	36	155



Penalties collected during this report period by Conservation Police Officers: \$13,341

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

North	144
Central	142
South	210
Marine	193
Total Calls Received	689

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

Administration - 8

1 Chief
2 Deputy Chiefs
1 CPO II Training
2 CPO I Training
1 CPO III Admin
0 CPO II Admin
1 CPO I Admin

Northern Region - 12

1 CPO III
2 CPO II
8 CPO I
1 ASR

Central Region - 10

1 CPO III
2 CPO II
6 CPO I
1 TA 2

Southern Region - 12

1 CPO III
2 CPO II
8 CPO I
1 ASR

Marine Region - 13

0 CPO III
3 CPO II
9 CPO I
1 ASR

Special Investigations Unit - 3

1 CPO III
1 CPO II
1 CPO I

Total Employees: 58

Northern Region Highlights

On Saturday, August 24, 2024, CPO Allen Sutton received a call from a State Park Police Officer regarding a complaint he heard come over National Parks Dispatch, regarding possible illegal bear baiting. CPO A. Sutton met with the State Park Police Officer and multiple National Park Service Rangers to investigate the complaint. CPO A. Sutton located a trail going into the woods that led to an extensive bear baiting site. There was no hunting stand located near the baited area. CPO A. Sutton re-visited the bait weeks later to find a hunting stand located approximately 50 feet from the bait. During the investigation, CPO A. Sutton located multiple other baited areas on various Wildlife Management Areas throughout Sussex County, that he believed to be the same individual. The barrels were chained and bolted into the trees and the hunting stands were all similar equipment, with the ladder sticks affixed to the trees with long screws. The cameras on the baited sites were also all set up the same, leading CPO A. Sutton to believe that it was the same individual. All the stands and baited areas were monitored until Black Bear Segment A season.

On opening day of Black Bear Segment A season, CPO A. Sutton coordinated CPOs J. Sikora, Merritt, Hausamann, C. Sikora, DellaVella, and Lt. Holmes to approach the different baited areas. CPO A. Sutton

arrived at his assigned bear baited area and approached the tree stand, to find no one hunting it. Upon leaving the baited area, CPO A. Sutton located the hunter at his truck. During the interview, the hunter admitted to shooting a black bear out of the stand prior to CPO A. Suttons arrival, as well as putting many bolts and screws in the trees to secure his bait barrels and cameras. An extensive search was conducted to locate the bear, with negative results. The hunter also informed CPO A. Sutton that another individual was hunting too close to a baited area, unrelated to the monitored baited areas. CPO C. Sikora searched the woods and apprehended the hunter too close to a baited area.

CPOs Merritt and Hausamann located two individuals hunting too close to the baited area they were assigned. Through an extensive interview, the individuals claimed to assist in putting out all the bait and barrels and securing them to the trees with bolts and screws. The CPOs also apprehended another individual hunting too close to a baited area later that day, unrelated to the monitored baited areas.

CPO Della Vella and Lt. Holmes did not observe anyone hunting the baited area they were assigned but inspected two hunters that had just harvested bears. A search of the woods was conducted and both hunters were also found to be too close to a baited area.

Due to the proactive work of the CPOs, a total of nine summonses were issued for hunting too close to a baited area and three summonses for damaging vegetation on a State Wildlife Management Area.

Central Region Highlights

On the night of Saturday October 5th and into the morning hours of the 6th, Lt. McManus, and CPOs Bickerton and Rooke patrolled Colliers Mills WMA and Assunpink WMA to address ongoing complaints of illegal activity on the properties after 9pm. They issued thirteen summonses for unauthorized entry onto a WMA during closed hours, possession of alcohol, and camping on the WMA.

On October 12th, the opening day of the north zone for waterfowl, CPOs Bickerton and Garofalo utilized a canoe to patrol Oakford Lake in North Hanover Township. Multiple waterfowl hunters were inspected, and a summons was issued for not having a federal waterfowl stamp.

Later in the evening, CPO Garofalo received a call about someone possibly illegally hunting in the Rancocas Creek. While walking around the area, CPO Garofalo heard a shot that was over 30 minutes past closed hunting time for waterfowl. After walking a long distance through some thick mud, CPO Garofalo located three hunters. One hunter, whose gun was still loaded almost an hour past sunset, admitted to taking the late shot. That hunter was issued a summons for hunting waterfowl during closed hours.

On Sunday October 20th, Lt. Riviello, Lt. McManus, and CPOs Bickerton, Kuri, and Garofalo patrolled Greenwood Forest WMA to address ongoing issues with illegal off-road vehicle use. They issued ten summonses for operation of an off-road vehicle on WMA, operation of a vehicle over prohibited area, and entering a posted restricted area.

Central Region officers recently investigated what was possibly the largest single item illegally dumped on a wildlife management area. Late in August CPO Kuri responded to Greenwood Forest WMA for a report of an abandoned 32-foot motor home in the quail area parking lot off of Rt 539. He was able to find the last registered owner's information. The previous owner said that he last saw his RV in a storage yard in 2011 before the property changed ownership. He provided legal documents indicating that the RV was in the possession of an auto salvager who had attempted to claim the title to the vehicle. Though CPO Kuri gave the auto salvage the opportunity to explain how the motor home ended up on the WMA, he declined to provide any information about who might be responsible. CPO Kuri issued the auto salvager summonses for dumping on a wildlife management area, illegal solid waste dumping greater than 0.148 yards, and abandoning a motor vehicle on public property.



Southern Region Highlights

CPO Vazquez interviewed a Camden County hunter who was accused of taking another hunter's deer. During the interview the officer believed the hunter was not being truthful regarding how many deer were killed. The officer asked to see the recent harvest as per the check in requirements. The hunter advised the officer the deer carcass was disposed of by burial in an adjacent farm field. Armed with a shovel CPO Vazquez and Lt. Batten escorted the hunter to the area where the carcasses were buried. The CPOs uncovered unaccounted for deer and a buck that was registered as a doe. The hunter was charged with illegal possession of a white tail deer, failure to register a deer properly and failure to produce a deer upon request.

CPOs Chillari and Malinski attended Trunk or Treat in Maurice River Township of October 19th. The CPOs handed out candy to a large crowd of Trick or Treaters. The CPOs utilized the Southern Region's UTV as well as a skeleton wearing hunter orange. The CPOs had positive interactions with many of the community members of Maurice River Township and other agencies in attendance.



CPOs were notified of a video showing a group of UTVs misusing state property. CPOs from the Southern Region were able to identify the area where the violations occurred, document the damage done to the area, and preserve evidence of the violations. As the result of an investigation, one operator was identified and was issued several summonses for operating an ATV on a state wildlife management area, damage to vegetation, operating a motor vehicle off the established roadway as well as other summonses.

During the early portion of the Fall Bow season, CPO Malinski interviewed a hunter regarding two deer harvested in Deer Management Zone 42. The hunter explained that he harvested both deer within 30 minutes of each other before returning to Pennsylvania. Officers with the Pennsylvania Game Commission assisted with the investigation which resulted in a full admission by the hunter that he fictitiously reported harvesting an antlerless deer to pursue an antlered deer. The hunter's antlered deer head was seized, and the hunter pled guilty to all four summonses which were issued.

Marine Region Highlights

In late August, CPO Klitz and Lt. Harp were conducting a shoreside patrol of Barnegat Light State Park in response to recent complaints of illegal tautog fishing activity. CPO Klitz observed two individuals leaving the jetty with large backpacks and fishing rods. The individuals were attempting to avoid detection by walking off trail through the dunes. CPO Klitz and Lt. Harp were able to identify potential exit points of the individuals and set up to intercept them as they exited the dunes. When the officers came into view of the individuals, they attempted to run and hide the backpacks. Their efforts were unsuccessful, and the individuals were apprehended with a total of 39 tautog, resulting in violations including over the daily bag limit and undersized fish. Summonses were issued for the violations.

CPO Bahrle observed a group of fishermen with several large coolers coming off the jetty in Barnegat Light State Park. To inspect the fishermen CPO Bahrle ended up having to follow them back to their vehicle, which was parked on a side street several blocks away from the State Park. Upon inspection the fishermen were found in possession of 61 tautog, of which 57 were less than the minimum size limit. Each fisherman was issued summonses for possessing over limit and undersized tautog. All fish were donated to a local food bank.

In late October, Officers with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation contacted Lt. Moscatiello while they were conducting a boat patrol in the EEZ. The Officers had inspected a vessel that launched out of Keyport, Monmouth County, which had numerous violations including possession of undersized and over limit black sea bass. The officers escorted the fishermen back to Keyport where they were met by CPO Bahrle. CPO Bahrle determined that the fishermen possessed 89 undersized and 88 over limit black sea bass as well as undersized tautog. The fishermen were all issued summonses. All the fish were able to be donated to a local food bank.