



NJDEP Fish and Wildlife
Monthly Highlights
Bureau of Law Enforcement
November 21, 2024 to December 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 7,207.9 hours of duty (6,879.3 - 2023) These hours are charged to the following categories of duty:

	2024	2023
Law Enforcement	5,500.3	5,214.9
Fishing	974.4	817.3
Marine Resources	1,214.5	995.1
Hunting	551.5	578.9
Deer Hunting	1,604.0	1,622.5
Trapping	19.3	9.5
Wildlife Mgt. Areas	197.1	145.9
NG & Endangered Species	19.7	18.4
Court	40.6	37.9
Regional Meetings	61.7	33.8
Pollution Investigation	6.5	20.0
Training	692.2	991.3
Other Law Enforcement	1,075.8	730.9
Administration	1,772.4	1,564.8
Wildlife Management	54.3	5.8
Information & Education	8.3	3.5
Bear Control	0.0	2.0
Bear Patrol & Invest	38.9	135.9

During patrols, officers performed 2421 field inspections (3 1 9 0 - 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	55	41	27	70	193	253
Criminal Arrests	2	0	0	0	0	0
Warnings Issued	3	1	3	4	11	16
Bear Feeding Warns Issued	0	0	0	0	0	1

Field Inspections By Region

Northern Region	536
Central Region	537
Southern Region	371
Marine Region	980
Total	2421

Field Inspections By Activity

Hunters	1326
Freshwater Anglers	4
Trappers	0
Commercial Fishermen	20
Marine Rec. Anglers	702
WMA non hunt/fish	104
Other	22

Listed below are the types of summonses issued:

	<u>North</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>Marine</u>
Fishing	0	0	0	0
Hunting	4	6	5	2
Waterfowl Hunting	0	1	4	0
Deer Hunting	46	17	16	0
Trapping	0	0	0	0
WMA	3	9	0	0
Striped Bass	0	0	0	0
Shellfish	0	0	0	0
Marine-Commercial	0	0	0	12
Marine-Recreational	0	0	0	53
Nongame & Exotic	0	0	0	0
Title 58	0	0	0	0
Title 39	0	0	2	0
Other	2	8	0	3
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	55	41	27	70



Penalties collected during this report period by Conservation Police Officers: \$42959.50

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

North	196
Central	141
South	205
Marine	207
Total Calls Received	749

Bureau of Law Enforcement personnel status as of Dec 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 - 11

- 1 CPO III
- 2 CPO II
- 7 CPO I
- 1 ASR

Southern Region - 12

- 1 CPO III
- 2 CPO II
- 8 CPO I
- 1 ASR

Marine Region - 14

- 0 CPO III
- 3 CPO II
- 10 CPO I
- 1 ASR

Special Investigations Unit - 3

- 1 CPO III
- 1 CPO II
- 1 CPO I

Total Employees: 60

Northern Region Highlights

On the opening day of the Six-Day Firearm Season, Deputy Chief Applegate and CPO J. Sikora responded to Allamuchy Mountain State Park, Mount Olive Township, Morris County, for a call about a motor vehicle that which been hit by three projectiles. Upon observation, CPOs were able to identify that the motor vehicle was stuck by three buckshot pellets. Using their training and experience, CPOs were able to identify the trajectory of the shot which came from a wooded area close by. No shooter was located in the woods during the initial response. Chief Panico, CPO Adam Merritt, and CPO Della Vella assisted in the investigation by finding key evidence. CPO Merritt and CPO J. Sikora focused their patrols for the remainder of the Six-Day Firearm season to apprehend the suspected shooter. With CPO Merritt and CPO J. Sikora's hard work and dedication towards the investigation, later that week, an individual was apprehended for shooting the motor vehicle. Appropriate summonses were issued.



On November 30, 2024, at 0600 hours, CPO Hughes was notified about a recently killed eight-point deer along Van Syckles Road on the Clinton WMA, Union Township, Hunterdon County. The individual who reported the deer to CPO Hughes first noticed it at 0515 hours. After sitting nearby, CPO Hughes watched an individual walk out of the woods and over to the deer, taking possession of it. CPO Hughes contacted the individual who admitted to shooting early but told multiple conflicting stories about the location and manner it was shot. The investigation led to seven summonses being issued for the following: Did hunt permit bow season before/after legal hours, Did shoot from or across a roadway, Did discharge weapon in a careless manner, Did interfere with the duties of a conservation officer, Did take deer in manner other than prescribed by Fish and Game Code, Did operate/park motor vehicle outside of established roads or designated parking areas.

CPO Merritt and CPO Della Vella responded to a complaint for an individual hunting too close to a residence off Foul Rift Road, Town of Belvidere, Warren County. On arrival, CPOs observed an individual actively deer hunting along the Delaware River. The individual was in possession of a loaded firearm approximately 393 feet from an occupied residence. The individual was found to be a certain person not to possess or receive firearms. The individual was arrested, and the appropriate charges were issued.

CPO Cowan Sikora spent two days patrolling the Newark Watershed properties on the UTV during the 6-day firearm season. He continued to check individuals that had never seen law enforcement in the remote areas of the woods and his presence was well received. Several violations were encountered during his patrols including two individuals with loaded firearms in a motor vehicle and possession of a firearm capable of holding more than three shells.

Central Region Highlights

On December 11, CPO Carman assisted with the prosecution of a solid waste dumping case initially investigated in February. Charles Londrigan Jr., of Little Egg Harbor, entered a plea agreement with the municipal court of Barnegat for his role in moving an abandoned boat into a pond on Greenwood Forest WMA, thus delaying and complicating the proper disposal of the boat. Londrigan pleaded guilty to illegal transport of solid waste over 0.148 cubic yards, and was assessed \$183.00 in penalty and cost courts, and \$3,752.95 in restitution for the clean-up and restoration costs.

During this reporting period, CPO Carman investigated two non-resident hunters for license purchase fraud. Both individuals had continued to purchase resident licenses in NJ despite moving to and claiming residency for hunting licenses in other states. A North Carolina resident was issued summonses for five counts of wrongfully purchasing a resident license, defrauding the state of \$684.75. A Maryland resident was issued summonses for two counts of wrongfully purchasing a resident license, defrauding the state of \$240.00.

Central Region Officers have investigated several complaints of hunters harassing other hunters on public land this month. In one incident on November 27th, Lt. Riviello investigated a complaint by a duck hunter that another duck hunter threatened to shoot him, if he didn't move, for setting up too close to his blind on the Pennsauken Creek. The hunter who made the threats was issued a summons for hindering the lawful taking of wildlife.



During the six day firearm season, Central Region CPOs were busy inspecting hunters throughout the week. During these patrols, summonses were issued for possessing a loaded firearm within 450 feet of a building, hunting without the required fluorescent orange, failure to exhibit hunting license, and hunting without a license.

Southern Region Highlights

CPO Kille received information from a concerned citizen in Greenwich Township, Gloucester County of numerous gunshots bordering a residential area. The CPO discovered the location of the hunters who were field goose hunting. The CPO waited until the men concluded their hunt and were taking photographs of the geese they harvested before he conducted an inspection. Three hunters were inspected and found to be in possession of 15 geese. The hunters explained that they had been accompanied by two additional hunters earlier in the morning, accounting for the additional two limits of geese. One of the alleged hunters named was a division employee. The CPO contacted him only to discover that he had been at work all morning and not hunting. The three hunters were charged with taking over the limit waterfowl, hunting waterfowl without a state waterfowl stamp and a warning for not having a HIP number.

CPO Kille received a complaint of hunter harassment in Woolwich Township, Gloucester County. The complainant provided the CPO with trail camera photographs of an individual dispensing moth balls on his bait pile. The complainant suspected the man was a neighboring homeowner who had been seen walking his dog on the property prior to the incident. CPOs Kille and Vazquez interviewed the man days later. The man had no reservations in describing his hatred of hunters and even admitted to dispersing the moth balls, however, he explained he did it to scare off coyotes. The man was charged with the harassment of hunters and a written warning for criminal trespass.

CPOs Kille and Trembley conducted an inspection of a butcher shop in East Greenwich Township, Gloucester County following the opening weekend of out of state rifle seasons. The CPOs identified a couple of shop receipts that looked suspicious. The receipts, belonging to men that CPO Kille had charged before, were known to hunt in Virginia. The CPOs used an interview with the business owner to ascertain that the deer were unlawfully registered in NJ after the hunters delivered it to the shop. The whole deer carcasses were seized as evidence and interviews were conducted with the two hunters. Full confessions were obtained identifying the deer originated from Richmond County, Virginia. The hunters were charged with unlawful possession of deer, unlawful registration of deer and warnings for the unlawful interstate transport of whole deer carcasses.

Marine Region Highlights

CPO Tomlin charged a North Carolina-based commercial fishing vessel operator for engaging in directed landings of summer flounder and black sea bass without the required New Jersey permits. The vessel landed and sold thousands of pounds of flounder and black sea bass to a permitted dealer on three separate occasions in November. The vessel was charged with making the landings without a permit and the dealer was also charged for receiving the fish from an unpermitted vessel.

Lieutenant Petruccelli found an Avalon-based recreational charter fishing vessel in unlawful possession of striped bass in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Lieutenant Petruccelli conducted an inspection of the vessel approximately nine miles offshore where it was actively fishing for and in possession of six striped bass. The first offense for possession of striped bass in the EEZ is a fine of \$250 per fish. The case was referred to the National Marine Fisheries Service for enforcement action.