Highlights

Marine Region – October 2021

Conservation Police Officers assigned to the Marine Region have been extremely busy responding to numerous complaints reporting the illegal taking of tautog. In total, officers have issued more than 125 summonses for various tautog-related violations including possession of undersized fish, harvesting over the daily limit, interference, mutilation, trespassing for purposes of taking wildlife, and littering while fishing. The cases ranged from a single fish to as many as several dozen fish in some instances.

CPO’s Raker and Tomlin found a Wildwood-based commercial scallop vessel in possession of Atlantic sea scallops over the daily limit. Upon the vessel’s return from a limited-access-general-category scallop fishing trip in the Mid-Atlantic Sea Scallop Access Area, the CPO’s conducted a thorough inspection and found 30 pounds of shucked scallops over the legal limit of 600 pounds. The excess scallops were concealed in various places on board the vessel and had an estimated market value of approximately $600. The case was referred to National Marine Fisheries Service for enforcement action.

While on patrol in Fortescue, CPO Raker noticed a vehicle parked next to the Fortescue Creek on a property posted “No Trespassing.” CPO Raker inspected three individuals at the vehicle who were found to be in possession of 10 undersize stiped bass. He quickly made his way to another group fishing in the creek and found a second bucket containing additional undersize striped bass, which was hidden in the phragmites along the creek. A total of 14 undersize striped bass were recovered ranging in size from 12 - 16”in length. The fishermen were issued summonses for over limit and undersize striped bass and for trespassing for purposes of taking wildlife.

CPO Tomlin was patrolling in Avalon, Cape May County when he took up surveillance on multiple fishermen on a jetty. CPO Tomlin witnessed several undersized tautog retained by the fishermen. The tautog were placed into a woman's purse and they hurried off the jetty. CPO Tomlin located the fishermen short distance away, and upon inspection were found to be in possession of 16 undersized tautog and 14 tautog over limit as well as an undersized and out of season summer flounder. The fishermen were issued summonses for the violations.