

**NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife
Monthly Highlights
Bureau of Law Enforcement
November 21, 2021- December 20, 2021**

Frank Panico, Chief
Jason Snellbaker, Deputy Chief
L. Anne Quirk, Captain – Administration
Tom O'Rourke, Lieutenant - Training
Vacant, Lieutenant– Training
Joseph Soell, Conservation Police Officer - Administration

Northern Region (908) 735-8240

Douglas Applegate, Captain
Steven Sutton, Lieutenant (District 1)
Joseph Kuechler, Lieutenant (District 2)
Vacant, Lieutenant Investigator
Vacant, Administrative Assistant 1

Central Region (609) 259-2120

Shannon Martiak, Captain
Bryan Mascio, Lieutenant (District 3)
Sean McManus, Lieutenant (District 4)
Vacant, Lieutenant Investigator
Shari Irick, Technical Assistant 2

Southern Region (856) 629-0555

Lisa Lacroix, Captain
Zane Batten, Lieutenant (District 5)
Craig James, Lieutenant (District 6)
Vacant, Lieutenant Investigator
Sue Canale, Agency Services Representative

Marine Region (609) 748-2050

Brian Scott, Captain
Paul Toppin, Lieutenant (District 7)
Ryan Harp, Lieutenant (District 8)
Chris Petruccelli, Lieutenant (District 9)
Vacant, Lieutenant Investigator
Noreen White, Agency Services Representative

Conservation Police Officers report a total of 6009.2 hours of duty (7691.2 - 2020). These hours are charged to the following categories of duty:

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Total Law Enforcement	4685.4	6226.6
Fishing	26.4	67
Marine Resources	1338.9	1245.6
Hunting	534	911.3
Deer Hunting	1748	3073.6
Trapping	23.9	11.4
Wildlife Mgt. Areas	159.5	174.7
NG & Endangered Species	21.8	7.7
Court	43.5	20.4
Regional Meetings	0	0
Pollution Investigation	17.3	40.2
Training	396.1	47.8
Other Law Enforcement	376	626.9
Administration	1284.9	1419.3
Fish Management	0	2.8
Wildlife Management	28.7	29
Information & Education	10.2	13.5

Bear Control	8.6	1.5
Bear Patrol and Investigation	1	108

During patrols, officers performed 4389 field inspections (4585 -2020) 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>Adm.</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>2020</u>
Summonses issued	54	64	26	255	0	399	296
Criminal Charges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warnings issued	6	3	40	13	0	62	26
Bear Feeding Warnings	2	0	0	0	0	2	0

Field Inspections by Region

Administration	70
Northern Region	736
Central Region	793
Southern Region	840
Marine Region	1950
Total	4,389

Field Inspections by Activity:

Hunters	2264
Freshwater Anglers	33
Trappers	4
Commercial Fishermen	37
Marine Rec. Anglers	1823
WMA non-hunting/fishing	194
Other	34

Listed below are the types of summonses issued:

	<u>North</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>Marine</u>	<u>Adm.</u>
Fishing	0	0	0	0	0
Hunting	10	9	0	0	0
Waterfowl Hunting	0	1	0	0	0
Deer Hunting	41	43	15	1	0
Trapping	1	0	0	0	0
WMA	2	8	9	0	0
Striped Bass	0	0	0	0	0
Shellfish	0	0	0	5	0
Title 2C	0	0	0	0	0
Marine-Commercial	0	0	0	1	0
Marine-Recreational	0	0	0	104	0
Nongame & Exotic	0	0	0	0	0
Title 58	0	0	0	0	0
Title 39	0	2	0	0	0
Other	0	1	2	2	0
Bear Hunting	0	0	0	0	0
Bear Feeding	0	0	0	0	0
Marine Striped Bass	0	0	0	142	0
Totals	54	64	26	255	0

Penalties collected during this report period by Conservation Police Officers: \$17,783.00

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

North	* numbers not reported due to office closure
Central	373
South	* numbers not reported due to office closure
Marine	146

Total calls received: 519

Bureau of Law Enforcement personnel status as of 12/20/21:

Administration - 5

1 Chief
1 Deputy Chiefs
1 CPO I - Admin
1 CPO II – Training
1 CPO III- Admin

Northern Region – 10

1 CPO I
2 CPO IIs
7 CPO IIIs

Central Region - 9

1 CPO I
2 CPO IIs
5 CPO IIIs
1 Technical Assistant 2

Southern Region - 12

1 CPO I
2 CPO IIs
8 CPO IIIs
1 Agency Services Rep

Marine Region - 15

1 CPO I
3 CPO IIs
10 CPO IIIs
1 Agency Services Rep

Total Employees: 51

Northern Region Highlights

On 11/25/2021, CPO Holmes was on patrol at the Pequest WMA during a pheasant stocked day. Two hunters were actively working a hedgerow back to their vehicle and were loaded upon inspection. The closest hunter was 47 yards to a residence and the house was clearly visible from his location. The second hunter was found to be 80 yards from the residence. Both hunters were issued a summons for possession of a loaded firearm within 450 feet of an occupied building.

On 11/25/2021, while patrolling the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in Walpack Twp., Sussex County, Lt. S. Sutton and Captain Applegate inspected a group of pheasant hunters along Old Mine Road. As the CPOs were driving away, one of the hunters shot a pheasant while standing on the paved portion of the roadway. One summons was issued for discharging a firearm from a public roadway.

On 11/29/2021, during the permit muzzleloader deer season, while patrolling in Wantage Twp., Sussex County, Lt. S. Sutton located a vehicle parked on a farm. Located on the seat of the truck was an empty gun case. A records check showed that the registered owner did not possess a DMZ 2 Muzzleloader

permit. Lt. Sutton located and inspected the hunter who was actively hunting without a valid permit. One summons was issued for hunting deer during permit muzzleloader season without a valid permit.

On 12/1/2021, CPO Della Vella received information that a hunter had purchased a DMZ 5 bow permit after killing a deer in DMZ 4, which was closed. The hunter allegedly registered the deer on the DMZ 5 permit. CPO Della Vella responded to the suspect's residence in Sandyston Twp., Sussex County and interviewed the suspect. CPO Della Vella received a full confession from the suspect, who had killed the deer in his yard. Appropriate summonses were issued.

On 12/6/2021, CPO Holmes conducted an interview of a suspect of an alleged illegal deer harvest. Consent was obtained to search his property for an antlered deer that was illegally harvested on November 7th. The deer was not on his property, but a photograph was obtained of the deer in question from his cell phone. The suspect stated that he shot the deer from the ground in a nearby field, but the evidence collected in November by CPOs Paey and A. Sutton showed the deer was shot from the roadway. Upon further questioning, the suspect admitted to seeing the deer as he was driving home and then shooting the deer from the roadway with a crossbow. The suspect was issued summonses for hunt without a valid archery permit, fail to register deer by 7 pm, hunt with the aid of a motor vehicle, shoot from or across a roadway, and possess and untagged/unregistered white tail deer.

On 12/18/2021, CPO Della Vella, assisted by Lt. Kuechler, investigated a suspect that registered a 10-point buck, in Livingston Twp., Essex County. The suspect registered the buck on a muzzleloader buck tag, on a day when the season was closed. CPO Della Vella interviewed the suspect and received a confession from the hunter that he had taken the deer with a bow but registered the deer on his muzzleloader tag because he had already tagged a buck on his permit bow buck tag. Summonses for take over the limit of antlered deer during the permit bow season and failing to properly tag/register a deer were issued.

Central Region Highlights

CPOs Bickerton and Carmen performed several boat patrols during the report period. The CPOs focused on the Coastal Zone area in the Central Region. Many inspections were made. Several violations were enforced during the patrols. Violations included: did hunt with a firearm capable of holding more than three shells, and hunting without a federal duck stamp.

CPOs Garofalo and Riviello have been utilizing the deer harvest database and identifying individuals who appeared to have been checking in illegal deer. Multiple interviews were conducted in Burlington and Mercer counties. As a result, the officers have identified a group of deer that were illegally tagged. Summonses were issued.

During the six-day firearm season, CPO Bickerton performed a butcher inspection. Inside the cooler was a large eight-point antlered deer without any paperwork. During the investigation, it was determined the hunter harvested the deer without valid bow permit or buck tag. The deer was seized, and the appropriate summonses were issued.

Lt. Mascio performed an inspection on a group of hunters in Robbinsville Township. During the inspection, it was determined that one individual concealed a rifle in the woods. The rifle was found and seized. Additionally, Lt. Mascio identified untagged deer and some individuals hunting without valid zone permits.

While on a waterfowl patrol near the South River in Sayreville, Officer Bickerton came across an individual that was striper fishing. He had two short striped bass on the ground and eight short striped bass on a stringer. He claimed he was going to throw all the fish back. The appropriate summons was issued.

Southern Region Highlights

CPO Stites handled a call from a property owner in Monroe Township, Gloucester County. A hunter heard a shot close to private property and notified the landowner of a potential trespassing issue. The landowner investigated the allegation and observed a hunter on his property after he had killed a deer. CPOs Stites and Trembley responded to the call and issued the hunter a summons for trespassing and failure to properly register a deer.

CPO Stites investigated an ongoing complaint regarding an unlicensed hunter in Elsinboro Township, Salem County. It was reported to Stites that the hunter had returned to the location and was not wearing the required hunter orange. Stites inspected the hunter to find out that he was hunting with archery equipment but did not possess a valid permit for the season. The hunter was issued a summons for hunting without a valid permit.

CPO Vazquez received a complaint from a division employee regarding a vehicle that was spotted driving around with furniture in the bed of the truck. The same furniture was later observed dumped within Winslow WMA. The complainant was diligent and recorded the license plate of the vehicle when it was originally observed. CPO Vazquez contacted the registered owner of the vehicle, who took responsibility for dumping solid waste on the WMA. Charges for dumping solid waste and discarding refuse on the WMA have been filed in the Winslow Municipal Court, in Camden County.

CPO Kille received a complaint through the OGT line indicating that waterfowl hunters were actively hunting on Malaga Lake in Franklin Township, Gloucester County on the day before the south zone season re-opened. CPO Kille located the hunters and informed them that waterfowl season was closed. Both hunters were issued a summons for hunting during the closed season.

During six-day firearm season, CPO Vazquez was patrolling the White Oak WMA, in Franklin Twp., Gloucester County. CPO Vazquez encountered a local deer hunting club actively driving deer. When the drive ended the hunters returned to their vehicles and drove away to set up another drive. The officer observed several weapons uncased in the motor vehicle and conducted an inspection. The hunters were charged with possessing an uncased gun within a motor vehicle.

CPO Faith received a call about illegal dumping in progress in the Great Egg Harbor WMA, Hamilton Twp., Atlantic County. CPO Faith arrived in minutes and found Hamilton Twp. Police on scene with two men. The caller witnessed a man dumping the debris, confronted him while blocking the vehicle from leaving, then called both Hamilton Twp., and Trenton Dispatch to report it. The debris which consisted of the remnants of an old shed, had already been cleaned up by the dumper before CPO Faith and the PD had arrived. The man was charged with dumping debris on a WMA and dumping solid waste under Title 13.

Marine Region Highlights

During late November through December, Marine Region CPOs from the entire unit were incredibly busy responding to complaints involving the illegal harvesting of striped bass along the Raritan Bayshore. More than 500 illegal striped bass were seized from fishermen found in violation. CPOs issued more than 200 summonses. Most summonses issued were for undersize fish, however many individuals possessed double digit numbers of fish. Additional summonses issued included possessing overlimit, oversized, and mutilated striped bass as well as failure to obtain a saltwater registry, interference, and littering while fishing. The overwhelming number of violations occurred between Perth Amboy and Union Beach. When possible, some of the seized fish were donated to food banks while others were submitted to Marine Fisheries for the collection of biological data.

During a mid-November boat patrol, CPOs Raker and Sloan observed an individual along the Cape May Canal scraping oysters off the rocks. Since the area is classified as prohibited to the harvest of shellfish, CPOs confronted the man who initially claimed that all he harvested was a couple of oysters he was using as bait for fishing. Upon further investigation and interview, CPOs found an additional 956 oysters in the man's vehicle that he admitted to harvesting from the prohibited waters of the canal. Summonses were issued for the harvesting of shellfish from condemned waters, failure to obtain a shellfish license, and possession of more than 150 shellfish without a commercial license.

CPOs Raker and Tomlin apprehended several men on board a Delaware-based recreational fishing vessel in possession of striped bass approximately 10 miles offshore in the Exclusive Economic Zone where striped bass fishing and possession is unlawful. Upon boarding the vessel to conduct a routine inspection, the men told CPO Tomlin that they did not have any fish on board. CPO Tomlin found striped bass scales scattered about the deck of the vessel and investigated further. After some discussion with the men, they admitted to CPO Tomlin that they had a bag of filleted striped bass hidden inside the cabin of their vessel. Upon retrieval of the bag of fillets, CPOs counted eight separate fillets from four striped bass. The case was referred to National Marine Fisheries Service for federal enforcement action.

Training Unit Highlights

The Training Unit hosted two class sessions for Conservation Police Officers on ICAT (Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics) per Attorney General mandates. ICAT training is a program that provides first-responding police officers with tools, skills, and options for successfully and safely defusing a wide range of critical incidents. ICAT was created by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) whose members include police chiefs, sheriffs, and other local, state, and federal law enforcement officials.

The Training Unit attended a 3-day Train the Trainer on ABLE "Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement". The purpose of the class is to introduce and facilitate buy-in for active bystandership in law enforcement, discuss the science supporting ABLE, and learn several tactics to intervene effectively.