



BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION MONTHLY REPORT

**Al Ivany, Chief
Linda DiPiano, Supervising Biologist**

January 16 – February 15, 2022

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

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

Registration for the upcoming Spring Hunter Education Season will begin in mid-February with classes resuming on March 19. Hunter Education staff finalized logistics for the facilities that will be needed and information on registration and schedules was prepared to promote the program.

Staff continued developing standardized training for both current and new instructors. The new PowerPoint training presentation will help to ensure that the best and most consistent educational material and messaging will be provided to all instructors, including current policies and procedures regarding students.

Hunter Education instructor meetings were scheduled for the northern and southern regions of the state. Staff members continue to analyze data from previous years to determine potential trends in New Jersey's student base.

Staff responded to 217 emails during this report period. A total of 44 duplicate hunter education cards were issued as well as 57 non-resident hunting license unlocks (unlocking allows the ability to purchase the appropriate licenses and permits where applicable) and 12 rifle permit unlocks.

As anticipated during this time of year, current reporting numbers are down from the previous month.

Staff attended the Cape May Technical School's Natural Sciences program advisory board meeting to provide insight about careers in the fish and wildlife conservation field.

Staff attended and presented the NJ Fish and Wildlife Representative report to members of the Warren County Federation at their February meeting. Also, a Hunters Helping the Hungry (HHH) meeting was attended during this report period.

Hunter Education staff attended a meeting to discuss the future of our program (considered one of the best in the nation) and any possible changes moving forward to keep that distinction.

The statewide administrator met with U.S Fish and Wildlife Service staff who were impressed regarding how well New Jersey was able to adapt its program throughout the pandemic.

Staff scored one typical white-tailed deer from Atlantic County, which measured 141 2/8" after nearly 11" of deductions.

Staff attended an architectural and planning meeting for the future Holly Farms office in Millville (Cumberland County). Staffing needs were one of the topics discussed.

Staff also attended a NEAFWA conference planning meeting where a range of tasks were assigned. Hunter Education staff accepted numerous roles, including program facilitation, audio/visual assistance, hospitality management and outside event coordination.

Staff attended a Game Code meeting and assisted the Bureau of Wildlife Management's Deer Project with requests, analysis, and recommendations. One of the Game Code requests focused on a possible Zone 47 boundary change as well as a proposal to consolidate zones 55 and 65 into the surrounding Zone 25 regulations. Further discussions on this management change will be ongoing.

R3 (Joe Leskie, Ryan Risher, Courtney Venuti)

Staff prepared, edited, and posted the R3 Newsletter for February 2022 and distributed it via the Division website and the GovDelivery system.

Staff gave a presentation at the February Fish and Game Council Meeting providing a summary of results from the Pheasant and Quail Stamp buyer survey. Other metrics for purchasing options for the 2022 upland season continue to be finalized.

Staff met with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and NJF&W grants officers to discuss updates to the current R3 grant narrative regarding results of the 2021 program. Revisions to the narrative were forwarded to the USFWS for inclusion.

J. Leskie met with *Outdoor Women of New Jersey* (OWNJ) Program Coordinator K. Byrne to discuss content information and participant selection for the upcoming OWNJ/R3-mentored spring turkey hunting workshop.

Staff began analyzing hunter satisfaction and success rates from the previous season's *Tuckahoe WMA Managed Hunt*. A wrap up meeting is scheduled for March 10 to discuss the results and begin planning for next season.

Staff assisted at the *Gallant Heart of New Jersey Wounded Veteran's Hunt* at Buttonwood Farms in Hancock's Bridge (Salem County). The Division provides 100 pheasants to this event annually. Staff assisted with license logistics for approximately 25 veterans who participated from all over the country.

Staff attended a NEAFWA R3 committee meeting to continue planning for the upcoming conference as well as discuss plans for a meeting at the R3 Symposium.

Staff processed one R3 Mentor application during the report period.

NASP®

Staff is tracking down NASP archery targets for current and future use.

AQUATIC EDUCATION (Karen Byrne, Jessica Griglak)

Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center

Intern applications continue to be received. Qualified applicants will be interviewed in March.

Several inquiries about the captain position were received. An applicant has been interviewed and additional interviews are scheduled.

Requests continue to come in for 2022 program dates and the Sedge Island calendar continues to be updated.

Staff is working to streamline how volunteers can be used to help with programs and projects at Sedge Island.

Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament

Tournament brochures and posters were printed. Brochures were mailed to last year's participants. In addition, the Tournament Committee will be delivering brochures and posters to local bait and tackle shops. Registrations are being received and processed.

Staff is working on a new shirt design with a local business.

A Tournament Committee meeting was attended. Plans are underway for the upcoming event.

Trout in the Classroom (TIC)

Staff conducted an “*Ask a Biologist*” session for several classes involved in the TIC program. The students really enjoyed having their questions answered live.

Staff continues to work with schools to troubleshoot equipment problems. During this reporting period, staff worked with volunteers and a participating school to resolve an unforeseen emergency situation. Unfortunately, the school needed to drop out of the program and relocate their fish right away. Thankfully, the fish were taken to a nearby school already participating in the program.

A trout *restocking day* for schools that had completely lost their fish had to be rescheduled due to snow.

Permits for releasing trout were sent to landowners for signatures. The permits are being returned and processed.

The National Trout in the Classroom/Salmon in the Classroom (TIC/SIC) Annual Quilt Project was shared with New Jersey teachers who wished to have their students participate by creating a quilt square along with a written letter about their local watershed and trout.

The National TIC/SIC is currently developing a troubleshooting manual and staff was asked to serve on this committee. The first meeting was attended.

Green Eggs and Sand (GES)

Plans are underway to offer the Green Eggs and Sand workshop. Once again, this workshop will be offered virtually for five weeks covering each of the curriculum modules. A one-day field session is being planned to offer educators who participate in this workshop the opportunity to spend time on a horseshoe crab spawning beach, and to cycle through several of the activities offered as part of the curriculum.

Staff will be working with D. Rizio to get the Green Eggs and Sand curriculum online. Currently it is offered on a DVD.

Other

Staff assisted with planning and coordination of the February 16 Virtual Fish and Wildlife Staff Meeting as part of the Fish and Wildlife Events Committee.

Staff is working with R3 biologists to offer the Outdoor Women of New Jersey mentored turkey hunt. An application and informational flier was developed and posted on the website. Over 20 applications were received. Women selected to participate will be notified prior to the workshop allowing time for them to apply for the appropriate spring turkey permit. Mentors are being contacted. A virtual portion of the workshop is again being offered and several registrations were received to just attend the virtual portion.

Staff participated in the Rutgers Virtual Career Day event.

Staff attended an Association of Fish and Wildlife's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coffee Talk session entitled, "*What's in a Word.*"

WILDLIFE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH (Karen Byrne, Jessica Griglak, Liz Jackson, Alanna Newmark, Steve Verdi, and Tom Hill)

Pequest Natural Resource Education Center

An online form was created and posted on group programs at the Pequest Trout Hatchery. Groups have already started to use this form to request programs for the spring.

Public programs for the spring and summer are being planned. Online registration will open next month.

A new Pequest Environmental Education hourly, Tim Pagano, started during this reporting period. He is working with staff on exploring how to effectively offer an interactive virtual tour of the facility for TIC schools unable to visit for an in-person program. Staff is working to test which platform would be best to offer this type of program.

An Opening Day of Trout Season event for veterans is being planned for April 9. This event offers veterans a day to trout fish at the Pequest Education Pond. Invitations were sent to 57 veterans or veteran organizations. So far, 34 individuals have responded that they will be attending.

The Pequest calendar, group schedule and volunteer schedule continue to be maintained. Phones are answered as needed.

Mobile Education Trailer (MET)

The MET will be present at several events in the spring, summer, and fall. A webpage is being developed to highlight the trailer and requirements/procedures to schedule it for events.

Hooked on Fishing - Not on Drugs (HOFNOD) Program

Staff are working on a presentation for the March 8 Fish and Game Council Meeting that will highlight HOFNOD's accomplishments for 2020-2022 as well as plans for 2022.

The 7th annual Youth Fishing Challenge (YFC) will be held **Sunday**, June 5, 2022. Staff have begun to secure items in preparation for the event and are promoting the registration form to HOFNOD Teams and previous host sites. The YFC will be kept to a maximum of 30 host sites. To date, 20 have already registered.

Staff continue to plan and coordinate a Team Leader training for the summer, Hooked on Fishing Jamboree in the fall, career day for HOFNOD high school participants, and charter fishing trips for existing HOFNOD Teams.

WEBSITE ACTIVITY (Doug Rizio)

New and Updated Pages, Images, and Documents

Six (6) new pages were posted this report period: four (4) news posts, one (1) job post, and one (1) news archive page.

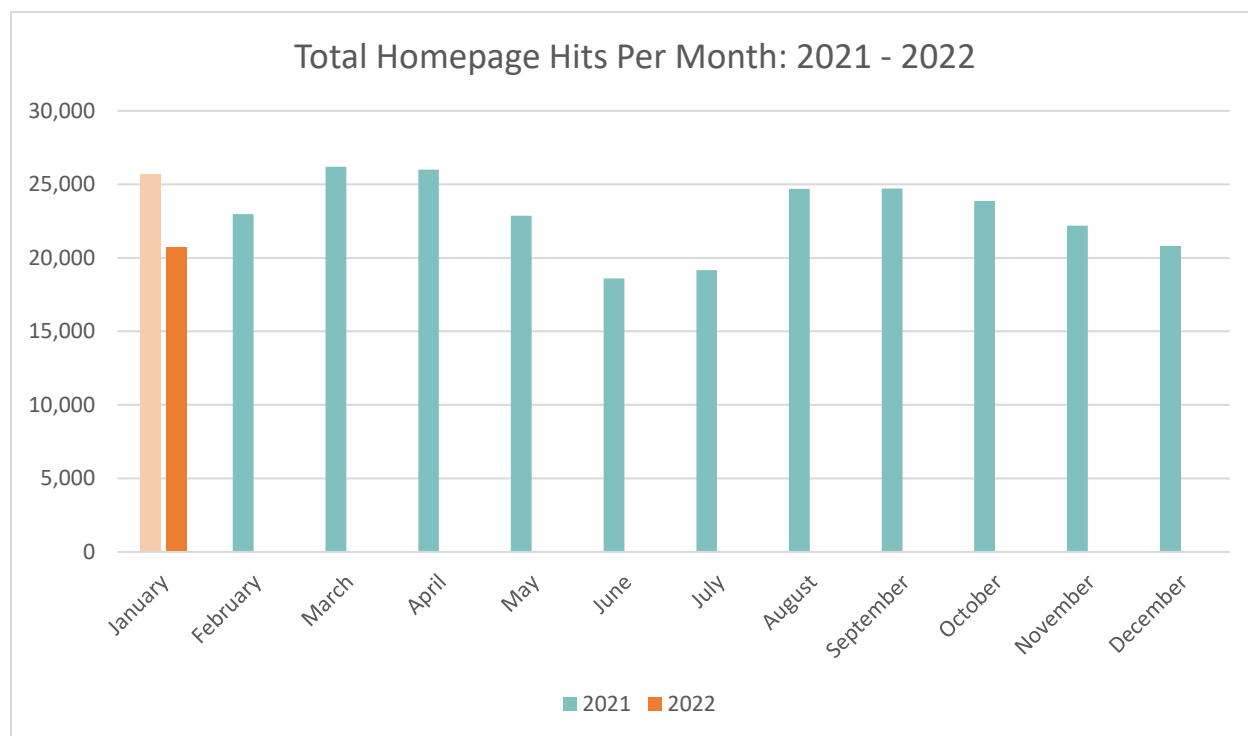
Approximately thirty-six (36) pages were revised/updated during the report period.

Fifteen (15) images were also edited and posted.

Approximately eighty (80) documents were edited in or converted to PDF format. These included: pages for the new Freshwater Fishing Digest (9); Council/Committee Documents in one zip file (3); Bureau Reports (9) in one .zip file; Wildlife Management Area maps (25); Minutes/Agendas (5), and twenty-nine (29) others.

Analytics

The number of hits on the homepage in January was 20,710; an average of 668 hits per day. It is a decrease of only 86 hits from the previous month of December (20,796) and a decrease of 4,934 hits from January 2021 (25,644).



The ten most visited pages in January were:

License Information – 19,867; <https://nj.gov/dep/fgw/licenses.htm>
Hunting & Trapping License Information – 10,392; <https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/hntlicfe.htm>
Fishing License Information – 9,019; <https://nj.gov/dep/fgw/fishneed.htm>
Regulations – 7,830; <https://nj.gov/dep/fgw/niregs.htm>
Hunting – 7,227; <https://nj.gov/dep/fgw/hunting.htm>
Deer – 6,508; <https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/deer.htm>
Hunter Education – 6,383; <https://nj.gov/dep/fgw/hunted.htm>
2021-22 New Jersey Hunting and Trapping Digest – 4,156;
<https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/dighnt21.htm>
Wildlife Management Areas – 3,998; <https://nj.gov/dep/fgw/wmaland.htm>
Employment Opportunities – 3,894; <https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/employ.htm>

Other popular pages were:

Hunter Training Areas – 3,712; <https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/ranges.htm>
Saltwater Fishing – 3,704; <https://nj.gov/dep/fgw/saltwater.htm>
Fishing in New Jersey – 3,619; <https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/fishing.htm>
Wild Turkey in New Jersey – 3,604; https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/turkey_info.htm
New Jersey's Endangered and Threatened Wildlife – 3,323;
<https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/tandespp.htm>
Freshwater Fishing – 3,142; https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/fishing_fresh.htm
Contact – 3,089; <https://nj.gov/dep/fgw/contact.htm>
Obtaining Hunting and Trapping Permits – 3,060;
https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/permit_info.htm
Waterfowl and Migratory Birds – 2,928; https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/waterfowl_info.htm
Black Bear Facts in New Jersey – 2,659; <https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/bearfacts.htm>

The ten most requested PDFs this report period were:

2021-22 Turkey Regulations – 3,482; <https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/pdf/2021/turkregs21-22.pdf>
2021-22 Hunting & Trapping Digest – 3,436;
<https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/pdf/2021/dighnt21.pdf>
2021-22 Migratory Bird Seasons – 3,202; https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/pdf/2021/21-22mig_seasons-tent.pdf
2021-22 Firearm Deer Regulations – 2,482;
https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/pdf/2021/deer_regs_firearms21-22.pdf
2021-22 Deer Archery Regulations – 2,331;
https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/pdf/2021/deer_regs_archery21-22.pdf
NJ Wildlife Rehabilitators – 1,655; https://nj.gov/dep/fgw/pdf/rehab_list.pdf
Black River WMA map – 1,579; https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/pdf/wmamaps/black_river.pdf
Snakes of New Jersey – 1,566; https://nj.gov/dep/fgw/ensp/pdf/snake_broch.pdf

2021-22 Deer Regulation Sets – 1,309; <https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/pdf/2021/regsets21-22.pdf>
2021-22 Pheasant Stocking Schedules – 1,296;
https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/pdf/2021/pheas_sched21.pdf

Additional Activities

Additional activities included virtual meetings concerning migration to WordPress; virtual meetings concerned the Bear Marketing campaign; weekly social media meetings; and Commissioner’s Updates.

WILDLIFE INFORMATION/DIGEST EDITOR - TRENTON (Cindy Kuenstner)

This is my final monthly report. As of March 1, 2022, I am retired. Colleagues, Council and constituents are wished the best as you continue to conserve and enjoy New Jersey’s wildlife resources. ~ Cindy Kuenstner

Digest Production

The 2022 Freshwater Fishing Digest has been distributed to license agents and other outlets statewide. Work continues on the 2022 Marine Digest, currently in the Pass 1 revision stage. This issue is due out in late April.

Outstanding Deer Program

Preparation continues to hold the Garden State Deer Classic rescheduled for August 11–14, 2022 in Edison. The combined number of hunters whose deer were accepted into the program and harvested during both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 hunting seasons is 111.

Communications and Outreach

Staff cataloged numerous wildlife photos for agency use (Digest, social media, website, reports) offered by an amateur photographer.

Other work completed during this reporting period: observed DEP Commissioner LaTourette’s weekly broadcasts; revised the hunter database for the Outstanding Deer Program; updated the Deer Classic winners lists for the awards engraving company; provided updates on the award templates; finalized the freshwater Digest printer proofs and approval document; edited articles for the Marine Digest; collaborated with numerous colleagues regarding updates and revisions to components of the Marine Digest; secured several additional photos for the Marine issue; arranged with the Digest publisher to exchange a reduced press run of the Marine Digest for four more pages per document to accommodate additional content and prepared revisions to the first pass of the Marine Digest which were submitted to the publisher.

WILDLIFE INFORMATION - TRENTON (Kathy Porutski)

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

SARS Covid-2 Detected in NJ's Deer Population

NOV Postings (2) – Emergency Management Program Lateral Opportunities

Environmental Specialist 2

Administrative Analyst 3

NOV Postings (2) – Natural and Historic Resources

Program Specialist Trainee

Forest Fire Pilot

NOV Postings (3) –

Management and Budget (Training Tech 2)

Watershed and Land Management (Gov. Rep 3; GIS Specialist Temp)

Mandy Dey is Retiring!

NOV Postings (3) –

Site Remediation & Waste Management Program (Geologist 1)

Watershed and Land Management Program (Fiscal Assistant - Temp)

Office of Equal Opportunity and Public Contract Assistance (Adm. Assistant - Hourly)

Donating Benefit Time for T. Bussell

Donating Benefit Time for Sarah Friend (DFW)

January Bureau Reports

NOV Posting - Watershed and Land Management Program

Grant Administrator (Temporary)

Andy Burnett is Retiring!

Fish and Wildlife Virtual Staff Meeting 2/16

Passing of Former DFW Business Office Administrator Matt DiMattia

Most Phone Lines Down @ Pequest

Pequest Phones Completely Not Operating

New Fax Line @ Black River WMA

NOV Posting - Site Remediation & Waste Management Program (Executive Asst. 3)

Phones Back Up at Pequest

Division of Fish and Wildlife Director's Updates – February 10, 2022

Cindy Kuenstner is Retiring!

NOV Postings (6) –

Office of Equal Opportunity and Public Contract Assistance

Affirmative Action Officer 3

Contract Administrator 2

Air Quality, Energy & Sustainability Program

Environmental Services Trainee

Environmental Engineer Trainee

Administrative Analyst 4 - Information Systems

Executive Assistant 3

Pequest Phones Out Again

NOV Posting - NHR (Program Specialist Trainee)

NOV Posting - DFW (Conservation Police Officer Recruit)

Spotlight Announcements Created w/ Images:

DFW Virtual Staff Meeting – February 16

Also, during this reporting period: the Bureau of Information and Education’s Monthly Report for January was compiled and edited; Commissioner’s Teams Meetings were remotely attended; Long Branch literature and a saltwater taffy price quote were solicited for the upcoming NEAFWA conference in April; the posting of agency policies for employee access on SharePoint was discussed; guidance was offered to ENSP staff regarding an employee’s retirement; procedures to set up an electronic bulletin board were researched; various versions of the new 130th agency logo were rated; agency history and past logos were forwarded to Director Golden; a significant amount of time was devoted to organizing and emailing Notice of Vacancies; a retirement flier was designed for C. Kuenstner and photos were uploaded to her Kudoboard; and the IC employee/retirees e-mail lists were updated.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Jonathan Carlucci)

Publications/Graphics

- Governor’s Surf Fishing Poster setup and changes
- Graphics for Social, Internship, fishing labels, etc.
- Wireframe reviews for web
- F&W logo versions
- GovDelivery Headers created for turkey posts
- F&W logo changes for review, 130th logo versions
- Dynamic QR code for Jobs landing page
- Wireframe comment review for images
- WMA sign print request
- 7 QR codes created for use in the Digest
- Images added for ENSP to Oxford Communications photo resource

Social Media

The DFW Facebook (FB) page had **42,812** followers at the end of this reporting period. Overview of the Facebook page over the past 28 days:

DISCOVERY:

Post reach - 520,956

Post engagement - 37,633

New Page Followers – 264

INTERACTIONS:

Reactions - 6,051

Comments – 1,019

Shares – 1,157
Link Clicks - 12,112

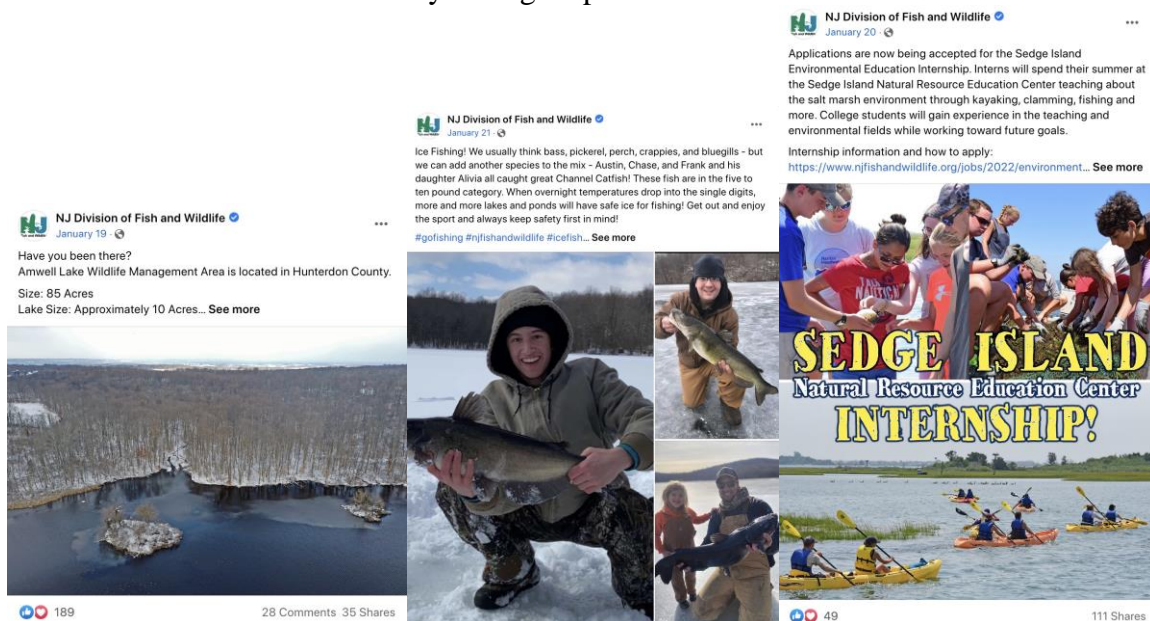
Topics with notable reach:

“Have you been there?” Amwell Lake Wildlife Management Area
Post with aerial photo. – reached 22,000 people and received 1,327 in engagement.

“Ice Fishing!”– reached 26,909 people and received 1,905 in engagement.

A Sedge Island Environmental Education Internship post reached 27,403.

If you have ideas for a Social Media post, please contact Jonathan.Carlucci@dep.nj.gov while I cover Social media for Katie Paey through April 2022



Photography/Videography

- Aerial stills and footage of Ken Lockwood Gorge WMA for social library
- Download, and upload/share of aerial footage
- Heislerville DOIT survey site visit
- Aerial stills and footage of Heislerville WMA for social posts and library
- Download, review, and upload of footage
- Winter b-roll capture and cataloged
- Staff photos shared
- Scenic coastal image collection created and shared with staff
- Video reviews and feedback
- After Effects animation work on intro and outro videos of F&W logos
- Internal requests for photographs

- Monthly flight training performed

Meetings/Training

1/20/22 NEAFWA meeting

Friday Social schedule meetings

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Matt Hencheck)

Video Production

- *NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife's 130th Anniversary* video – This is a compilation video celebrating the agency's 130th anniversary. The video begins with several historical photos dating back to the 1940s and transitions to recent projects from every bureau over the past six years.
- *NEAFWA Conference Welcome* video – This video will serve as the “Welcome to New Jersey” NEAFWA conference opener in April. It begins with various scenic landmarks while incorporating many of the agency projects currently conducted throughout the state.
- *NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife Career* video – This video was previously used last spring at the Rutgers Career Day event. The production highlights a variety of projects conducted by each bureau. The video was updated with additional content and added to the Division's website under the main employment page.
- *Tautog Tagging* video – This video was created and posted in the winter of 2020. Recently, changes were made to the reporting section. The production was edited and reposted with the updated information on tagging and reporting tautog.
- *New Jersey Black Bear Safety* video – An educational video on black bears in New Jersey, including species history, biology, habitat, and research efforts. At present, three short versions of safety tips have been edited and posted to social media. Version One highlights what to do if confronted by a bear. The other two videos (How to Address Bear Attractants in Your Yard and How to Keep Your Pets and Livestock Safe from Bears) focus on bear-proofing one's home and surroundings.

SOCIAL MEDIA (Katie Paey)

Katie Paey will be on maternity leave through mid-April 2022.

If you have ideas for a Social Media post, please contact Jonathan.Carlucci@dep.nj.gov or Michelle.Smith@dep.nj.gov.

BLACK BEAR EDUCATION PROGRAM (Michelle Smith)

Black Bear Outreach Program

The contract marketing vendor selected to implement a multi-media outreach campaign updated the black bear webpages for the agency's website transition to WordPress. Creative badges were developed to highlight pertinent information including bear tips, bear alerts, bear facts and bear research. The vendor also developed a flow chart to outline media spend options once the campaign launches in March. In addition, the media campaign incorporates brand lift studies for YouTube and Facebook.

The YouTube bear education and public safety video was approved by the Department's Office of Communications. Closed captions were added and video segments were created to cover topics such as removing bear attractants, securing pets and livestock, and safety tips in case of an encounter. These short videos will be posted on the agency's social media pages and DEP's YouTube page to increase public awareness about safely coexisting with black bears. In addition to safety guidelines, the production includes information on black bear biology and current agency research/management efforts.

Division Website Development

The agency's contracted website developer provided all of the main hub page designs for staff review. Hubs included the new homepage, fisheries, hunting, wildlife, conservation, and destinations pages. The developer also provided a schedule for the website development meetings remaining until the official launch in early summer. In March, staff will begin to develop new webpages for the site.

Wildlife Habitat Supporter Program

The Wildlife Habitat Supporter (WHS) program marketing campaign continued with promotional email messages, social media ads/stories, cross-platform standard banners, and Connected TV ads. The vendor also developed WHS program signs for placement at wildlife management areas across the state to engage recreational users.

NEAFWA 2022 Conference

Planning continued for the 77th annual Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Conference. Various aspects of event planning transpired including coordinating the plenary session, scheduling symposia, technical talks, workshops, and social activities as well as assigning specific roles to staff.