



## **BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

### **MONTHLY REPORT**

**January 16, 2021 – February 15, 2021**

#### **HUNTER EDUCATION/NASP/R3**

##### **Hunter Education (Keith Griglak, Sam Forlenza)**

Hunter Education schedules are nearly finalized for the spring. Classes will be posted during the week of February 15. Judging by the amount of phone calls, it promises to be a very busy spring season.

Annual spring instructor meetings were scheduled and will be presented virtually. Considerable time has been spent analyzing last year's data and preparing the results for presentation with charts and graphs.

Staff gave a presentation to the Fish and Game Council's Game Committee on crossbows.

Staff conducted an ice fishing webinar entitled *Ice Fishing: The Coolest Sport on Ice*. It is the first webinar geared toward first-time ice anglers. A total of 181 people attended with numerous positive comments. The webinar was also placed on the DEP's YouTube channel. Within the first week of posting, there were approximately 1,500 views. Additional programs in this format will be developed for the future.

Staff continue to process duplicate card and rifle education requests.

### **NASP® (Katie Paey)**

Two emails were sent to participating schools: one providing information on mandatory annual reporting guidelines during the pandemic and one notifying schools that New Jersey will *not* be holding an annual state tournament this year due to lack of school participation. Information was also shared about the Virtual National Tournament that will take place in the spring.

### **R3 (Ryan Risher)**

Staff attended the non-profit organization Gallant Heart's "*Pandemic Perseverance*" Pheasant Hunt. Birds were donated for the event and staff was on hand to issue one-day licenses. Twenty active duty/retired veterans participated.

Staff has been working on two surveys slated for release during the next two months to apprentice hunters and pheasant/quail stamp buyers in New Jersey. Modifications were made to determine if targeted email communications and/or COVID-related influences correlate with participation numbers.

Staff participated in a forum with Matt Bartley, event coordination specialist with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to discuss 2021 mentoring programs. The discussion focused on ways to improve survey methods as well as planning, executing, and scaling public events.

Due to inclement weather, staff had to reschedule a target shooting event hosted in partnership with the Pine Valley Trap Club of Berlin (Camden County). The new date is set for March 11 and fortunately, registration remains at nearly full capacity.

Staff also had to cancel a deer butchering workshop scheduled for the Garden State Archers facility in Jacobstown (Burlington County). The workshop was scheduled to complement a Central Jersey Limbhangars' mentored deer hunt for women.

Efforts to coordinate a virtual deer shed hunting workshop for early March are underway.

### **AQUATIC EDUCATION (Karen Byrne)**

#### **Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center**

Sedge Island internship applications are being received and interviews are being scheduled.

Staff received approval to offer one-day programs at Sedge Island. Subsequently, a schedule and program content are being drafted.

## **Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament**

Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament brochures and posters were printed and are being distributed to local bait and tackle shops. In addition, brochures were mailed to previous registrants. Registration/checks are being received and processed.

## **Other Activities**

A women's mentored turkey hunt is currently being planned. Women who applied to participate in the 2020 workshop (which had to be canceled due to COVID-19) were allowed to register first. Of the 14 students who were registered in 2020, 10 signed up for 2021. A virtual women's turkey hunting workshop is also being planned in coordination with the mentored hunt. The virtual session is open to women aged 18 years or older. Registration applications for that workshop are being received and processed.

An ice fishing workshop was held on GoToMeeting for 16 women. Students who registered received a small tackle box with ice fishing tackle for use as part of the workshop.

An ice fishing webinar was held on February 5 for more than 180 participants. Keith Griglak presented, while staff moderated the event. Lots of positive feedback was received, and more webinars are being planned for the future.

Staff is exploring the possibility of offering a hybrid *Green Eggs and Sand* workshop this year for teachers.

Staff continues to pursue a virtual platform to offer educational programs.

Assistance for the Support NJ Seafood story map continues.

## **WEB SITE (Paul Tarlowe)**

### **New or Updated Pages, Images, and Documents**

Eight (8) new pages were posted this report period, including Circle Hook FAQs and seven (7) "News" pages.

Approximately seventy (70) pages were revised and/or updated during the report period.

Six (6) images were edited and posted, including those for e-mail banners (2), waterfowl (2), Sparta Mountain (1) and shooting range regions (1).

Approximately thirty-seven (37) documents were edited in or converted to PDF format. These included: Minutes/Agendas/Presentations/Reports (15); and twenty-two (22) other documents. Additionally, twenty-eight (28) WMA maps (14 topo, 14 roads) were posted.

## **Listserv Messages**

Fourteen (14) messages were drafted and sent to various e-mail lists and outdoor writers.

## **Analytics**

The number of hits on the homepage in January was 25,644; an average of 827 hits per day. It is a decrease of 12,579 hits from January 2020.

The ten most visited pages in January were: License Information – 20,932; Hunting – 9,274; Fishing License Information – 9,168; Hunting License Information – 9,160; Regulations – 7,347; Deer Information – 7,254; Hunter Education – 7,172; Hunting Digest – 4,524; Wildlife Management Areas – 4,498; and Ranges – 4,199.

Other popular pages were: Contact Us – 3,837; License Agents – 3,757; Saltwater Fishing – 3,678; Fishing Information – 3,447; Permit Information – 2,976; Places To Fish – 2,919; Wild Turkey in New Jersey – 2,827; Endangered and Threatened Species List – 2,749; Freshwater Fishing – 2,711; Waterfowl Information – 2,506; Public Hunting Land – 2,310; Employment – 2,238; and Freshwater Digest – 2,190.

The most requested PDFs this report period in descending order were: Hunting Digest; Bow Deer Hunting Regulations; Firearms Deer Hunting Regulations; Small Game Seasons Summary; Snakes of New Jersey; Marine Regulations Summary; Turkey Regulations; Bear Recipe Guide; Air Gun FAQs; Migratory Bird Regulations Summary; and Saltwater Fishing Guide.

## **Responses to the Public**

Responses were made to approximately 255 e-mail messages, many concerning hunting regulations, hunter education and licensing. Additionally, responses were sent to eighteen (18) referrals from the Assistant Commissioner's Office and eleven (11) messages from the DEP Public Access Center phone line.

## **Additional Activities**

Additional activities included completing the State Policy Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace 2021 class, virtual meetings with staff for our revised website and upcoming trout season, weekly social media Teams meeting with co-workers and attending the Commissioner's Weekly Updates Teams meetings.

For more information about the Division's website, contact Paul Tarlowe at 908-637-4125 x114 or via e-mail at [Paul.Tarlowe@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Paul.Tarlowe@dep.nj.gov).

## **WILDLIFE INFORMATION/DIGEST EDITOR - TRENTON (Cindy Kuenstner)**

### ***Digest Production***

Production continues on the 2021 *Marine Digest*, due out in May. The first proof is in the review period.

Materials are under development for the 2021 *Hunting & Trapping Digest*. A shelf date has not been determined.

### **Outstanding Deer Program**

Hunter inquiries about entering the program were handled. Staff referred hunters to official measurers in their area for scoring their deer.

### **Facebook and Instagram Pages**

Staff monitors posts that generate considerable follower comments. Photos are provided to accompany posts as requested.

**Other work completed during this reporting period:** observed DEP Acting Commissioner LaTourette's weekly broadcasts; cataloged wildlife and scenic photos; searched files for image of a bowhunter; edited, refined, finalized and submitted all marine *Digest* materials to the publisher; *Digest* articles were sent to authors for review, comment and approval; filed several revision suggestions for next year's freshwater and hunting *Digests*; considerable networking with sportsmen and residents on local wildlife-related issues; discussed with colleagues about Apprentice Hunting License requirements; contacted Green Acres regarding hunting leases and public access on Green Acres-encumbered lands; research attempting to solve Internet connection issues during virtual meetings and discussed the issue with the DEP HelpDesk; edited a written account of a Law Enforcement poaching case for the marine *Digest*; made revisions to *Digest* items for the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament and Sedge Island program ads; sent the *Digest* first pass to Director Golden as a reference for preparing the Director's Message and for distribution to the DEP Communications Office for approval; voted on the qualifying HOFNOD logo contest entries; discussed hunting *Digest* revisions with colleagues; requested 2021 freshwater *Digest* corrections to the publisher's eRegulations site and for our files; updates were received on the APAIS program for the marine *Digest* and confirmed with the Division of Science and Research any needed changes to the *Fish Smart, Eat Smart* marine *Digest* advisory.

## **WILDLIFE INFORMATION - TRENTON (Kathy Porutski)**

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

NOV Posting - Supervising Administrative Analyst (Div. of Budget and Financial Ops.)

NOV Posting – Program Manager, Division of Occupational Health and Safety  
 Division Letterhead – January 2021 (Drafted; Not Sent)  
 NOV Posting - Clerk Typist (Waste Enforcement, Pesticides and Release Prevention)  
 Div. of Pensions & Benefits Hosts Webinars for Staff with Less Than 15 Years of Service  
 Pensions & Benefits Webinar Addendum  
 NOV Clerk Typist Position Revised  
 3 NOV Postings - Site Remediation & Waste Mgt. (2); State Park Police (1)  
 Passing of Former NJ Fish and Game Council Chairman Fred Space  
 NOV Site Remediation & Waste Management Env. Engineer Position Revised  
 Division of Fish and Wildlife Updates – Week of January 25, 2021  
 Federal Aid Grant Specialist Lateral Opportunity (Div. of Fish & Wildlife)  
 Staff Advised to Avoid Changing Passwords Until Further Notice  
 NOV Postings (2) - Compliance and Enforcement Program  
 NOV Posting - Exec. Asst. 3 (Division of Solid & Hazardous Waste)  
 NOV Postings - Water Resource Mgt. Program (12); DFW (1)  
 NOV Posting - Manager 4 ( Site Remediation and Waste Management Program)  
 NOV Posting - Manager 1 (Watershed and Land Management Program)  
 January Bureau Reports  
 NOVs - Division of Budget and Financial Operations (1); Division of Information Technology (1); Division of Parks and Forestry (1)  
 NOV Posting Revision (Manager 1 - Watershed and Land Management Program)  
 Microsoft OneDrive and TEAMS Training Available to All NHR Employees  
 REMINDER: Div. of Pensions & Benefits Hosts Webinars (2/9 & 18) for Staff with Less Than 15 Years of Service  
 NOVs Within DEP (3)  
 NOVs in DEP (revision)  
 Content Needed for Social Media Posts  
 NEW Project Request Form for I&E Assistance  
 NOVs to be Posted 02/10/2021 – Division of Parks and Forestry  
 NOV Posting - Forest Fire Observer  
 Face Masks Required in State Offices and on Grounds

### **Spotlight Announcements Created w/ Images:**

Groundhog Day  
 President's Day

**Also, during this reporting period:** Bureau of Information and Education's Monthly Report for January was compiled; Commissioner's Team Meetings were remotely attended; and the retiree email list was edited.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Matt Hencheck)**

### **Video Production**

- *Black Bear Educational Video* – Plans to finish editing the first draft version of the video will be completed in late January.
- *Cape May Piping Plover Habitat Restoration Project* – Filming began on a winter habitat restoration project for piping plover being conducted near Cape May Lighthouse. The project began during the summer of 2020 and plans to edit and release the video are slated for this summer.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA (Katie Paey)**

### **Facebook**

The DFW Facebook (FB) page had **38,106 followers** and **36,133 likes** at the end of this reporting period.

Twenty-four (**24**) Facebook posts were posted this period. Posts include photographs and video taken by staff, graphic pieces created for special promotions and shared posts from other pages.

**Posts with the most reach and engagement this period** – **Reach** is the number of unique people who have seen content associated with our Facebook page. **Engagement** is post clicks, likes, comments and shares (any action someone takes on the page or post):

**1/29** – Hunter Education Update - reached **23,356** people, **1,659** engagements

**1/19** – Artificial Reef Deployment - reached **16,770** people, **1,364** engagements

Staff continues to like and respond to comments and other questions on the FB page in post comment threads, direct messages to our page, event postings and outside timeline posts.

### **Instagram**

The DFW Instagram page had **9,278 followers** at the end of this reporting period.

Twenty-two (**22**) Instagram posts were posted this period. Posts include photographs and video taken by staff, and graphic pieces created for promotions.

**Instagram posts with the most reach this period** –

**2/8** – Northern Saw-whet Owl Video - reached **11,503** people (highest reach of all DFW Instagram posts)

**1/22** – Hunters Helping the Hungry - reached **5,564** people

Staff monitored and responded to comments and private messages as needed.

### **Graphics and Photography**

- Clinton WMA was photographed for WMA Wednesday social media campaign.

### **Other Activities**

- Participated in weekly Social Media / GovDelivery Planning Meetings on 1/22, 1/29, 2/5 and 2/12
- Participated in DFW Photo Campaign Meeting on 2/8
- Staff comments on the draft range brochure were received and edits were made

**Content for Facebook and Instagram is continuously needed. *If you have ideas for a Social Media post, please contact Katie.Paey@dep.nj.gov.***

## **WILDLIFE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

**Pequest Natural Resource Education Program (Linda DiPiano, Jessica Griglak, Chris Lido, Alexandra Clark, Steve Verdi and Tom Hill)**

### **Pequest Trout Hatchery & Natural Resource Education Center**

No program requests were received for the summer or fall. One class was rescheduled for 2022. The Public Trout Meeting was reformatted to go virtual.

The Pequest calendar as well as group and volunteer schedules continue to be maintained.

Staff continues to check voicemail messages remotely. Calls are returned or messages sent as needed.

A Request for Information (RFI) form was developed for building and installation of pre-designed exhibits, and bids were received. Discussion continues with Department of Treasury staff on how to proceed with awarding the project to the lowest bidder.

The water line replacement project continues to move forward.

A pre-bid meeting for the Pequest roof project was canceled.

Grounds continue to be maintained.



### **Trout in the Classroom (TIC)**

Communication with teachers is ongoing as school instruction continues to change between in-person and virtual.

A monthly newsletter was developed and sent to teachers.

Staff worked with the national TIC program coordinator to create a virtual quilt project.

Staff is currently working on a virtual escape room for students.

### **Mobile Education Trailer (MET)**

Staff continues to develop hands-on activities that can be used to accompany the trailer.

### **Other**

Work on the Record Fish Program continues.

The Alliance for NJ Environmental Education (ANJEE) Conference was attended.

Staff attended the webinar, *Meeting Teachers Where They Are*, hosted by the Aquatic Resource Education Association. The webinar focused on ways to engage teachers and students in a virtual learning world.

### **Hooked on Fishing - Not on Drugs (HOFNOD) Program (Liz Jackson, Alanna Newmark)**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Fishing Challenge will be held on Free Fishing Day, Saturday, June 5. Registration materials were prepared and posted on the website. To date, four sites have registered. This year, event registration will be limited to 30 sites. The *Save The Date* and *Score Card* designs are being updated.

A logo was selected from 13 HOFNOD Logo Contest submissions. A diverse group of judges assisted in the selection process. Those who submitted a logo were notified of the final selection. The winning logo will undergo a few minor edits so that it can be used effectively in printed and online content.

Staff is assessing 2021 program team needs. In addition to providing masks, staff is crafting activities and events for adult leaders and youth that will engage them in a safe manner.

Staff continues to prepare virtual content for HOFNOD leader training. A hosting platform for the training continues to be sought.

## **BLACK BEAR EDUCATION PROGRAM (Michelle Smith)**

### **Black Bear Education Program**

Meetings were held to discuss recommendations for expanding aspects of the Black Bear Education Program. The Division will focus mainly on web-based and social media educational approaches to reach the maximum number of residents and visitors with bear safety information, including those in urban areas and southern counties. The bear education program recommendations were presented to the Fish and Game Council's Game Committee.

A meeting was held with the DEP Office of Local Government Assistance to discuss ways in which the Division can partner with them to increase municipal outreach efforts statewide and better educate residents about coexisting with black bears.

The latest draft version of the bear education and public safety video was reviewed by Division staff and recommendations were made for revisions. An excerpt of the video was shown to the Fish and Game Council's Game Committee. The production will be finalized and placed on the DEP's YouTube page to increase public awareness about safely coexisting with black bears. In addition to safety guidelines, the video includes information on black bear biology and current Division research and management efforts.

### **Wildlife Habitat Supporter Program**

A meeting was held with a marketing firm vendor, Dana Communications, to discuss their marketing proposal for developing a multi-media promotional marketing campaign for the Wildlife Habitat Supporter program.

### **Division Website Redesign**

Meetings were attended to discuss redesigning and modernizing the Division website. Bids were received from all website development State contract vendors and contract paperwork was compiled. Website redesign templates were collated from each bureau and a redesign template was drafted for the Bureau of Information and Education.

### **Outreach Group**

An Outreach Group Project Request form was finalized for use by Division staff to request assistance with tasks such as videography, photography, drone work and graphic design.

A Division IC message was sent out to promote the new form. In addition, a second IC was distributed to request staff submissions for social media posts.

A meeting was held to finalize details before promoting the Division's new photo campaign.

**Other**

A meeting was attended on license sales and agency relevancy. Weekly bureau recap and social media post meetings were attended.