



## **BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

### **MONTHLY REPORT February 16, 2021 – March 15, 2021**

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

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

Staff posted March and April Hunter Ed schedules. More than 600 students registered in the first 24 hours. Currently, all firearm classes are booked while archery classes remain half filled. Firearm class sizes have been increased and a few more range sessions have been added to help keep up with the demand.

For the remainder of the spring, classes have been scheduled for every weekend as well as two weekday classes every other week.

Staff virtually hosted four annual instructor meetings. About 75 instructors attended.

Staff attended a trapping committee meeting.

A virtual advisory board meeting for the Cape May County Technical School's Natural Sciences Program was attended.

Staff hosted one hunter education class in the southern region for 65 firearm students and 51 archery students.

In the northern region, one hunter education class for 63 firearm students and one class for 50 archery students were hosted. Both classes had extremely high attendance rates of more than 90 percent.

Staff continue to process duplicate hunter education and rifle card requests.

### **NASP® (Katie Paey)**

One NASP Basic Archery Instructor (BAI) Training was scheduled for the month of April.

A \$1,000 NASP Easton Foundation Grant was allocated to a newly participating school. A BAI Training is being scheduled for this facility.

Staff responded to several emails from inquiring schools regarding trainings, equipment, and general information about the program.

Assistance was provided to BAIs submitting annual NASP reports.

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

Staff attended a virtual meeting with Aspira licensing system representatives to discuss the development of R3-related platforms within the system's Insights Dashboard. These platforms will allow for a more efficient means of accounting for new customers participating in hunting and angling. It will also make it easier to see retention and churn rates of the hunting and fishing population year to year.

Staff hosted a Shed Hunting webinar on March 5. Attendees learned about deer biology related to antlers, legality related to possession of sheds, tips on shed hunting, etc. Despite connectivity issues, the webinar was well received with 108 attendees.

A "*Date night*" trap shooting event was held at the Pine Valley Gun Club in Berlin (Camden County) on March 11 for 44 individuals. A similar event has been scheduled for mid-May at this location.

Staff virtually attended the Wildlife Management Institute's 86<sup>th</sup> annual North American Wildlife and Natural Resource Conference on March 8-12.

Staff met virtually with the Women in the Outdoors (WITO) chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) to discuss R3 in New Jersey. Statistics on women's participation rates in our state were presented and a focus group was held to gain a better understanding of motivations, networking needs, etc. of the meeting participants.

Staff is coordinating a turkey calling workshop slated for March 25 with Lou Gambale, New Jersey NWTF state chapter president.

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

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

The internship application period for Sedge Island closed with twenty-three (23) applications received. Thirteen (13) individuals were interviewed and of these, four (4) were offered internships. All four applicants accepted, and plans are currently underway for intern training.

Approval to have one-day programs at Sedge Island was granted. Staff is now developing a schedule and associated program content.

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

Summer flounder is now an eligible species for the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament. The category was added after the Marine Fisheries Council approved season dates for that species. To date, registrations are being processed, and brochures/posters are being distributed to bait and tackle shops throughout the state.

### **Angler Recruitment, Retention Reactivation (R3)**

An Angler R3 plan is being developed with Pequest Education and Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs program staff members. A fishing instructor *train-the-trainer* program is also being created.

Staff used the R3 *New Hunter Survey* to develop one for anglers who purchased fishing licenses in 2020. The survey will help guide Aquatic and Pequest Education programs as 2021 programs are being developed. Hunter Education R3 staff provided the email list of license purchasers.

### **Green Eggs and Sand**

Presenters and content were coordinated for a hybrid *Green Eggs and Sand* workshop planned for this year. A registration flyer was developed, and staff is exploring options for partnering with a school to host the online content.

### **Other Activities**

Most of the participants who registered for the upcoming women's mentored turkey hunt applied for and received their turkey permits for the area they will be hunting in. Applications are currently being processed and staff has been reviewing class content provided by the National Wild Turkey Federation's Women in the Outdoors (WITO) program. In addition, a presentation given by former DFW Turkey Biologist Bob Eriksen was filmed for use during the virtual workshop.

A trout fishing webinar is scheduled for March 26. GovDelivery and social media are cross promoting this workshop along with a turkey calling webinar.

Staff continues to pursue a virtual platform to offer educational programming content. Staff is still awaiting input from the DEP's Division of Information and Technology (DoIT) on the possible options that were submitted.

Staff reviewed and provided comments and suggestions for the 2021 Marine Digest.

Staff continues to work with Hunter Education R3 staff to provide support as needed.

Staff continues to assist with the *Support NJ Seafood* story map.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Conservation Education Virtual Learning Conference was attended. After the conference, education staff met to discuss implementing the information into their programs.

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

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

Three (3) new pages were posted this report period for the Spring Trout Season (2) and the R3 Program. Thirteen (13) "News" pages were posted. One new page is being developed and several others are being updated for the Recreational Volunteer Angler Survey.

Approximately seventy-seven (77) pages were revised/updated during the report period.

Seven (7) images were edited and posted, including two page headers and one e-mail banner.

Approximately thirty-three (33) documents were edited in or converted to PDF format. These included: Minutes/Agendas (14); Hackettstown Stocking Summaries (9); and (10) other documents, including pages within the 2021 Freshwater Digest.

Presentations made at council/committee meetings and all bureau monthly reports are now being posted in .zip format.

### **Listserv Messages**

Sixteen (16) messages were drafted and sent to various e-mail lists and outdoor writers. Assistance was provided to staff for three additional messages.

### **Analytics**

The number of hits on the homepage in February was 22,971; an average of 820 hits per day. It is a decrease of 7,321 hits from February 2020.

The ten most visited pages in February were: License Information; – 11,847; Hunter Education – 7,024; Fishing License Information – 6,906; Regulations – 6,867; Hunting – 5,764; Hunting License Information – 4,983; Turkey Information – 4,500; Saltwater Fishing – 3,986; Deer Information – 3,520; and Fishing Information – 3,135.

Other popular pages were: Contact Us – 3,053; Ranges – 2,966; Hunting Digest – 2,810; Permit Information – 2,625; Freshwater Fishing – 2,516; License Agents – 2,385; Wildlife Management Areas – 2,274; Employment – 2,211; Places To Fish – 2,104; Striped Bass Bonus Program – 1,957; Endangered and Threatened Species List – 1,841; and Bear Facts – 1,799.

The most requested PDFs this report period in descending order were: Turkey Regulations; Hunting Digest; Small Game Seasons Summary; Snakes of New Jersey; Wildlife Rehabilitators; Marine Regulations Summary; Saltwater Fishing Guide; Bow Deer Hunting Regulations; Freshwater Fishing Digest; Bear Recipe Guide; Air Gun FAQs; Bear Facts for Kids; and Permit Regulations.

### **Responses to the Public**

Responses were made to approximately 400 e-mail messages, many concerning the spring trout season, hunter education and hunting regulations. Additionally, responses were sent to twenty-two (22) referrals from the Assistant Commissioner's Office and ten (10) messages from the DEP Public Access Center phone line.

### **Additional Activities**

Additional activities included attending virtual meetings regarding the 2021 Hunting Digest, Trout Season, website migration to WordPress, zebra mussels, weekly social media Teams meetings with co-workers and the Commissioner's Weekly Updates meetings.

For further 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 the first week in May. The third proof is in the review process.

All materials and revisions for the 2021 *Hunting & Trapping Digest* remain outstanding except for Licensing/Permits, the Bureau of Land Management, and a Law Enforcement photo. Several hunting *Digest* update meetings discussed the revision progress to date.

## **Outstanding Deer Program**

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

## **Suburban Deer Management and Other Public Outreach**

Staff reviewed New Jersey and national surveys on public support of regulated hunting.

## **Fish and Wildlife's 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; for the marine *Digest*, staff refined the *Ocean Oddities* article, photos and title, replaced text and photo for APAIS piece, revised the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament text and image, discussed turkey permit language clarifications, updated the DEP logo, updated the record fish and skillful angler *Digest* entries, searched online stock photos for "ocean oddities" fish, replaced the *Gills to Grills* feature recipe, collaborated with I & E colleagues on a marine article title, submitted the first and second pass revisions to the publisher then began the third pass review, edited the Director's Message, discussed cover photo criteria with Marine staff and incorporated into the *Digest* the newly approved regulations for this season. Staff also requested updates to the publisher's online eRegulations version of the freshwater *Digest*; attended OneDrive and Teams online training; participated in several I & E hunting *Digest* revision meetings; completed mandatory online training on the *Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace*; observed the NJ EAS webinar on *Relationship Excellence* for workplace interaction; discussed municipal outreach efforts shared among bureaus; revised and discussed improved wording for turkey permit purchase guidance; discussed with a municipal attorney about licensing or certification of shooting ranges in New Jersey, also confirming with the N.J. State Police that ranges are not regulated at the state level and assisted a hunter to clarify the shotgun gauges legal for harvesting coyote at night.

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

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

Donated Leave for CPO Brett Nicklow  
Passing of DFW Director Golden's Father  
NOV Posting - Manager 3 (Site Remediation and Waste Mgt.)  
NOV Posting - Air Quality, Energy and Sustainability Program (Manager 4  
Technical/Scientific/Engineering)  
NOV Posting Amended - Manager 3 (Site Remediation and Waste Mgt.)  
Division of Fish and Wildlife Updates – Week of February 15, 2021  
Passing of CPO Allen Sutton's Grandparents

NOV Postings - DoIT (GIS Specialist 3 and IT Specialist)  
REMINDER - Microsoft OneDrive and TEAMS Training Free to NHR Employees 3/2 & 3/4  
NOV Posting - Office of Occupational Health and Safety (Occupational Health Consultant Trainee)  
Division of Fish and Wildlife Updates – Week of February 21, 2021  
NOV Postings - Compliance and Enforcement Program (3)  
Rutgers University Assistance Available to Find Internship/Employee Candidates (Drafted 3/2)  
Division of Fish and Wildlife Updates – Week of March 1, 2021  
NOV Postings (5) - Watershed and Land Management Program; Air Quality Energy and Sustainability Program (2); Legal and Regulatory Affairs/Office of Legal Affairs; Office of Record Access  
Revised Telephone Lists  
February Bureau Reports  
NOV Posting – Site Remediation and Waste Management Program (Contract Administrator 2)  
NOV Posting – DFW (Principal Biologist, Fisheries)  
NOV Postings (2) – DFW (Biologist Trainees)  
NOV Posting - Site Remediation and Waste Management Program (Assistant Geologist)  
NOV Postings (2) – DFW (Administrative Analyst 2, Fiscal Management; Research Scientist 3, Marine Fisheries)  
Quick Survey for Next Division Meeting

**Spotlight Announcements Created w/ Images:**

Winter 2021 – Stay Safe, Stay Healthy  
March 14 – Daylight Savings Time Begins  
March 20 – First Day of Spring

**Also, during this reporting period:** Bureau of Information and Education’s Monthly Report for February was compiled; Commissioner’s Team Meetings were remotely attended; suggested titles were offered for a marine Digest article of which *Ocean Oddities* was chosen; telephone directory files continue to be updated; and old turkey supplements were researched for T. McBride.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Jonathan Carlucci)**

**Publications/Graphics**

- Youth Fishing Challenge HOFNOD Save the Date card produced
- Created graphics for News Releases
- Graphics requests fulfilled for Marine Fisheries Staff
- Graphics created to support video production
- Home Page graphic created for Hunter/Anglers
- Program logos and graphics modified

## **Photography/Videography**

- 450 photos received to DFW email resource from the public were sorted, renamed, and saved to the One Drive to share with Division Staff
- UAV maintenance
- 5 WMA area photos/video files uploaded to One Drive and shared with staff
- Menantico, Winslow, and Makepeace WMAs site visits, photography, and videography
- Images shared with Wildlife Control Staff
- Assisted I&E Staff with video shoot in snow
- Stock photo request fulfilled
- Internal, press and communications requests for photographs and logos fulfilled

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

### **Video Production**

- *Black Bear Educational video* – Over the past month, staff reshot several new scenes and voiceover additions. The video is now in the late editing stages.
- *Turkey Presentation video* – Staff produced a video presentation on wild turkeys in New Jersey with Bob Eriksen, former DFW biologist and member of the National Wild Turkey Federation.

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

### **Facebook**

The DFW Facebook (FB) page had **38,555 followers** and **36,510 likes** at the end of this reporting period.

Twenty-five (**25**) 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):

**3/1** – Trout Stocking Meeting - reached **36,290** people, **4,116** engagements

**3/14** – Closed waters reminder - reached **34,208** people, **3,235** engagements

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



## **Instagram**

The DFW Instagram page had **9,485 followers** at the end of this reporting period.

Twenty-three (**23**) 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 –**

**2/22** – Hook A Winner Congratulations - reached **7,212** people

**3/1** – Trout Stocking Meeting - reached **6,631** people

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

## **Graphics and Photography**

The Capoolong Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) was photographed for the *WMA Wednesday* social media campaign.

## **Other Activities**

Staff participated in weekly Social Media/GovDelivery Planning Meetings on 2/19, 2/26, 3/5 and 3/12.

A required eLearning training course was completed.

**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.

The Pequest calendar, group schedule and volunteer schedule continue to be maintained.

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

The Department of Treasury has now advised staff to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the building and installation of pre-designed exhibits.

The water line replacement project has started.

Grounds continue to be maintained. The damaged sign on Route 46 was replaced and picnic tables are being repaired and painted.

The Pequest auditorium was used to film a turkey presentation for a women's virtual turkey hunting workshop.

Staff is reviewing content for a trout fishing webinar scheduled for March 26.

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

Communication with teachers continues as school instruction fluctuates between in-person and virtual. A document was created on identifying juvenile brook, brown and rainbow trout.

### **Angler Recruitment, Retention Reactivation (R3)**

Staff has begun to research other states' R3 angling efforts in preparation for developing a plan for New Jersey.

A fishing instructor *train-the-trainer* program is currently being developed.

Staff suggested reaching out to last year's freshwater fishing license buyers and drafted a survey to help guide program direction for this year and into the future.

### **Other**

Work on the Record Fish Program continues. A fish from the last day of 2020 was certified.

Staff attended the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation's (RBFF) Marketing Conference.

A *Youth Outside* webinar was also attended.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Conservation Education Virtual Learning Conference was attended.

### **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. Staff prepared registration materials for posting on the website. To date, fifteen (15) sites have registered to host a local event. This year, registration will be limited to thirty (30) sites. *Save the Date* and *Score Card* designs are being updated. The pick-up date for additional group materials is scheduled for April 22 and 23 in the Pequest facility parking lot.

Staff worked with the student artist who created the winning HOFNOD logo to make minor alterations that will better suit the program's needs. Because the modified artwork still needed a bit more polishing, staff engaged J. Carlucci for his graphics expertise.

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

One HOFNOD team will be expanding their program beyond Fair Haven in Monmouth County to Hoffman's Crossing in Hunterdon County.

Staff continues to work on preparing virtual content for HOFNOD leader training. A hosting platform continues to be sought.

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

### **Black Bear Education Program**

Copies of the black bear safety literature and the "Living with New Jersey Black Bears" DVD were mailed to the public upon request.

The Division's Bear Biology and Behavior webpage was updated to include additional information on the reproductive rates of New Jersey black bears.

Additional footage and narration were collected for the bear education and public safety video. The video is being created for placement on 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 Division research and management efforts.

### **Division Website Development**

Meetings were attended to discuss DEP's external WordPress site as well as redesigning and modernizing the Division website. Assistance was provided with compiling purchase order paperwork for the website development project contract.

### **Wildlife Habitat Supporter Program**

A meeting was held to discuss development of the Wildlife Habitat Supporter program and the prospects for hiring a state contract vendor to develop a multi-media promotional marketing campaign for the program.

### **Outreach Group**

Multiple requests were submitted by Division staff for assistance from the Outreach Group through the *Outreach Group Project Request* form and were forwarded to appropriate staff. The

Outreach Group assists bureaus with videography, photography, drone work and graphic design needs upon request.

A contact list was created to notify photographers participating in the Division's photo campaign that their images will be used in upcoming social media posts or graphics projects.

**Other**

Weekly Bureau recap and social media post meetings were attended.