



## **BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

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

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

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

Staff during this reporting period had:

Five (5) classes in the south: 214 firearm – 141 archery students  
Six (6) classes in the north: 338 firearm – 168 archery students  
Total: 552 firearm – 309 archery students

Show rates have been extremely high at present.

May and June classes have been posted. Class registration has been slow, which is typical for this time of year. Social media advertising has helped.

Staff obtained enough clays to last for the rest of the season.

Duplicate cards and rifle education requests continue to be processed.

##### **NASP® (Katie Paey)**

One NASP Basic Archery Instructor Training was held this month certifying 8 new BAIs and one new school.

During this reporting period, a \$1,000 NASP Easton Foundation Grant was allocated to one new school and a BAI Training has been scheduled for the faculty. The three schools awarded grants this year have until April 30 to order equipment.

A BAI Training for one new school has been scheduled for next month and two trainings are being scheduled with schools in May.

Assistance was provided to BAIs submitting annual NASP reports.

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

Staff met with the CEO Brian Sheets of the Salem County-based Gallant Heart organization to begin planning next year's upland hunts for active duty and veteran members of the military who have an interest in hunting and the outdoors, but need some mentored guidance.

Staff hosted a virtual *Introduction to Turkey Calling* with the National Wild Turkey Federation's New Jersey State Chapter President Lou Gambale. Despite some audio/video issues, approximate 120 sat in on the webinar to learn different calling techniques.

Staff met at the Good Sports Gunning Club in Millville to coordinate logistics for a women's turkey hunt and met the following week with assigned mentors at the Landis Sewage Authority in Vineland to determine hunting locations for the May 3-4 hunt.

Staff coordinated with the Division's Bureau of Land Management to have duck hunting blinds delivered to the Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area in Atlantic/Cape May counties.

Staff went out in the field to document various types of turkey sign to supplement an upcoming turkey hunting webinar slated for late April just before the season begins.

Staff finalized two R3 surveys, one for apprentice hunters and one for 2020 participating pheasant and quail hunters. The surveys are scheduled to go out in late April.

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

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

The Sedge Island facility was opened for the season. Boats were brought over to the dock and the water was turned on. Substantial flooding occurred over the winter however, all buildings are intact. The bulkhead, which continues to fail due to improper installation, has a larger hole behind it in a new area. Staff will try to patch any areas that are failing.

Staff is working with the DEP's Construction Management Office to replace the solar system batteries as they are no longer able to hold a charge overnight.

Staff is coordinating a schedule of programs to offer this summer, as well as partnering with Project Terrapin and the Conserve Wildlife Foundation's Osprey Project to offer Sedge Island interns additional research opportunities this summer. In addition, online registration options are being explored to increase efficiency.

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

Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament registrations are being processed and deposits made. One high school team has registered thus far.

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

Staff met with the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation to begin the process of writing an Angler R3 plan for the Division.

A trout fishing webinar was held on March 26. C. Lido presented *Trout Fishing: Terrain, Tactics and Techniques* to more than 400 webinar attendees, while J. Griglak moderated attendee questions. Participants provided overwhelmingly positive feedback and requested that the Division continue to offer these webinars.

### **Green Eggs and Sand**

The *Green Eggs and Sand Workshop* will be offered in partnership with The Wetlands Institute. This year's program will be a hybrid combination of videos, expert presenters and overview of activities offered online.

New Jersey educators will be given the opportunity to sign-up for an in-person trip to a spawning beach. Registration is open and educators are starting to register for the course.

### **Other Activities**

The virtual *Women's Turkey Hunt Workshop*, offered in partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation's Women in the Outdoors (WITO) program, kicked off on April 11 with 32 participants. Week one content was finalized and posted. Content for weeks two and three is currently being reviewed and finalized.

Plans for a *Women's Mentored Turkey Hunt* are being finalized. This hunt was originally offered to women in 2020, but was canceled due to COVID-19. Division staff met with New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs (NJSFSC) President Frank Virgilio and NJSFSC Cumberland County Chapter President Bob Russell to discuss preliminary details. The Good Sports Gunning Club in Millville has graciously offered its facility to act as a home base for participants and mentors who will utilize it for a field day session and post hunt activities. The actual hunt will take place at the Landis Sewerage Authority in Vineland on May 3 and 4. Division staff, including J. Sloan and J. Leskie, met with mentors to provide maps, hunting assignments and an overview of the event.

Staff continues to pursue a virtual platform to offer educational program content.

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

Staff provided feedback and content for the Division's group presentation during the *Rutgers University Tri-State Virtual Career Fair*.

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

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

Four (4) new pages were posted this report period: Volunteer Angler Survey (VAS), Skillful Angler Leader Board, Migratory Bird Season - Information and Population Status, and Employment Opportunity. Additionally, six (6) "News" pages were posted. The VAS page required several related pages being updated.

Approximately sixty-one (61) pages were revised/updated during the report period.

Fifteen (15) images were edited and posted for the Skillful Angler Leader Board.

Approximately forty-three (43) documents were edited in or converted to PDF format. These included: Ranges (12); Minutes/Agendas (7); and twenty-four (24) other documents.

Presentations and documents presented at council/committee meetings are now being posted in .zip format. All bureau monthly reports are also posted in .zip format.

### **Listserv Messages**

Eight (8) messages were drafted and sent to various e-mail lists and outdoor writers. Assistance was provided to staff for several additional messages.

### **Analytics**

The number of hits on the homepage in March was 26,204; an average of 845 hits per day. It is a decrease of 24,430 hits from March 2020.

The ten most visited pages in March were: Fishing License Information – 23,389; License Information – 21,079; Regulations – 11,972; Saltwater Fishing – 8,308; Fluke Information – 7,890; Spring Trout Information – 6,968; Turkey Information – 6,410; Hunter Education – 6,307; CHANJ – 6,108; and Youth Fishing Challenge – 5,878.

Other popular pages were: Hunting License Information – 5,513; Hunting – 5,217; Trout Stocking Schedule – 5,166; Fishing Information – 5,031; License Agents – 4,931; Ranges –

4,390; Striped Bass Bonus Program – 4,165; Freshwater Fishing – 4,100; Places to Fish – 4,088; and Wildlife Management Areas – 3,596.

The most requested PDFs this report period in descending order were: Turkey Regulations; Snakes of NJ; Marine Regulations Summary; Wildlife Rehabilitators; Freshwater Fishing Digest; Saltwater Fishing Guide; Trout Regulations; Hunting Digest; Freshwater Regulations; and Trout Allocations.

## **Responses to the Public**

Responses were made to approximately 415 e-mail messages, many concerning the spring trout season, hunter education and hunting regulations. Additionally, responses were sent to eleven (11) referrals from the Assistant Commissioner's Office and ten (10) messages from the DEP Public Access Center phone line.

## **Additional Activities**

Additional activities included virtual meetings concerning the: Places to Fish app; migration to WordPress; 2021 Hunting Digest; Communications Committee; and weekly social media and Commissioner's Updates.

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 - TRENTON (Kathy Porutski)**

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

NOV Postings (3) – Emergency Management Program (Comm. Operator Trainee), Division of Human Resources (Personnel Asst. 2), Division of Budget & Financial Operations (Purchasing Asst.)

DFW Employee Housing Posting (Hackettstown Hatchery)

NOV Postings (3) – DFW Office of Business Administration (Contract Administrator 1); I&E Hunter Education Program (Senior Biologist); I&E R3 Program (Senior Biologist)

Division of Fish and Wildlife Updates – Week of March 22, 2021

Wetlands Webinar Featuring ENSP & BLM Staff April 1

Donated Leave for Sarah Friend

NOV Posting – NHR Bureau of Forest Fire Management (Administrative Analyst 2)

Division of Fish and Wildlife Updates – Week of March 29, 2021

March Bureau Reports

NJDPB Hosts April Webinars

NOV Posting - Compliance and Enforcement Program (Environmental Assistant/Hourly)

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

**Earth Day April 22, 2021**

**Arbor Day April 30, 2021**

**Also, during this reporting period:** Bureau of Information and Education's Monthly Report for March was compiled and edited; Commissioner's Team Meetings were remotely attended; and employee email address books/files were edited.

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

### **Publications/Graphics**

- Graphics created to support video production
- New email signatures created for uniform use by staff
- New version of HOFNOD logo modified for staff review
- First draft of a landowner/manager eagle brochure created
- HOFNOD save the date card finalized for print
- Full page educational ad on the Sport Fish Restoration Program produced for the Marine Digest
- Email headers/banners created for group email lists
- Additional variations of HOFNOD logo created for use by staff
- Earth Day graphics created for DEP use

### **Photography/Videography**

- UAV maintenance
- Video production reviews and suggestions
- Approximately 200 photos received to DFW email resource from the public were sorted, renamed, and saved to the One Drive to share with Division Staff
- DFW UAV policy review and suggestions
- Stock photo request fulfilled
- Internal, press and communications requests for photographs and logos fulfilled

### **Other**

UAS group meetings attended  
DEP Communications Meeting  
Ethics Training completed

## PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Matt Hencheck)

### Video Production

- *Black Bear Education* video –An in-depth informative video on the state’s black bears. It covers the history, biology, and ecology of the species as well as the Division’s role in black bear research and management. The film also offers safety guidance.
- *Eagle Project* – Staff began filming eagles and their young in their natural habitat. WCC volunteers were also interviewed conducting their weekly monitoring and data collection efforts for each nest. Footage will continue to be taken throughout the spring.
- *Earth Week* – A social media celebration of the DEP’s efforts to strengthen New Jersey’s commitment to battle climate change. Staff was tasked to produce and edit five videos highlighting work of the DEP’s Division of Fish and Wildlife, and the Water Resource Management and Climate Flood Resilience programs. The videos are listed below.
  - *Division Career Day* – A video highlighting DFW projects in the field along with hiring information and helpful links.
  - *Impacts of Precipitation Extremes on Stormwater and Freshwater Fish* – An educational discussion on the ways climate impacts wildlife. This video includes dialogue with Fisheries Biologist Scott Collenberg.
  - *Take Your Kid to Work Day* – A video to highlight the importance of introducing and engaging young minds to become future stewards of our environment.
  - *Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB’s)* – A video emphasizing the impacts caused by harmful algal blooms in the state’s waterbodies and how DEP’s Water Resource Management Program is taking action to resolve them.
  - *Sea-Level Rise* – A video highlighting DEP’s Climate and Flood Resilience Program. The production explains how sea-level rise is impacting New Jersey’s ecosystems, crops, infrastructure, and communities.

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

### **Facebook**

The DFW Facebook (FB) page had **38,981 followers** and **36,874 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.

Post topics included: Fish Code update, WMA Wednesday (Makepeace Lake), turkey and trout webinars, Colliers Mills and Stafford Forge Range Construction, first day of spring, Rainbow Lake boat ramp closure, turkey permit claim deadline, horseshoe crab webinar, Wildlife Wednesday (American woodcock), trout and turkey webinar reminder, WMA regulations, job opportunity, OTC turkey permit sales, *Green Eggs and Sand Workshop*, Outdoor Women of New Jersey turkey workshop, catch and release trout promo, Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament, Striped Bass Bonus Program, Hunter Education registration, WMA Wednesday (Winslow), Opening Day of Trout Season and reminder, display your license, Wildlife Wednesday (mallard ducks), and *Bird of the Month*.

**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):

**3/31** – Catch and Release Trout Fishing Opens - reached **30,409** people, **3,806** engagements.

**3/26** – WMA Regulations - 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 our page, event postings and outside timeline posts.

### **Instagram**

The DFW Instagram page had **9,699 followers** at the end of this reporting period.

Eighteen (**18**) Instagram posts were posted this period. Posts include photographs and video taken by staff, and graphic pieces created for promotions.

Post topics included: WMA Wednesday (Makepeace Lake), turkey and trout webinars, Colliers Mills and Stafford Forge range completion, first day of spring, turkey permit claim deadline, Wildlife Wednesday (American woodcock), WMA regulations, OTC turkey permit sales, catch and release trout promo, Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament, SBBP, Hunter Education registration, WMA Wednesday (Winslow), Opening Day of Trout Season and reminder, display your license, Wildlife Wednesday (mallard ducks), and *Bird of the Month*.

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

**4/10** – Opening Day of Trout Season - reached **6,926** people.

**4/12** – Display Your License - reached **6,352** people.

Staff monitored and responded to comments and private messages.

### **Other Activities**

- Participated in weekly Social Media/GovDelivery Planning Meetings on 3/19, 3/26 and 4/5.
- Met with Marine Fisheries Administration staff to discuss social media ideas.

**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 messages remotely. Calls are returned or messages sent as needed.

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

A Pequest roof replacement meeting was attended.

### **Trout in the Classroom**

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

Trout in the Classroom website content was updated. Registration for the 2021-2022 school year is now being accepted.

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

Staff moderated questions for the *Trout Fishing: Terrain, Tactics and Techniques* webinar on March 26.

Staff compiled and organized a list of topic requests suggested from each webinar's post survey results.

A fishing instructor *Train-the-Trainer* program is currently being developed.

### **Other**

Work on the State Record Fish Program continues.

A *Volunteer Management 101* webinar 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. This year, event registration is limited to 30 sites and thus far, 26 have already registered. The *Save The Date* and *Score Card* design is being updated. Staff is currently gathering and preparing host site materials. Material pick up for the event will be on April 22-23 at the Pequest Parking Lot.

Staff is still waiting to receive video that was recorded as part of the virtual content to be used for the HOFNOD Leader Training class. The format will be a combination of videos, recorded lectures, face-to-face field experiences and online quizzes. A platform to host training continues to be sought.

Teams are beginning to gear up for the fishing season. Some teams have already been engaging youth, while others have a planned start in the coming weeks.

The annual Arbor Day/Earth Day Native Plant Giveaway is scheduled for April 22-23 at the Pequest Trout Hatchery. An e-mail message was sent to promote the event, which generated quite a bit of interest. The giveaway concept originally began as part of the Wild Schools Site Program and is now offered each year during Earth Week.

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

#### **Black Bear Education Program**

Recommendations for expanding aspects of the black bear education program were presented to the New Jersey Fish and Game Council. The Division will focus on utilizing web-based and social media platforms. In doing so, we hope to reach and educate the maximum number of

residents and visitors with bear safety information, including individuals in urban areas and southern counties.

A news release was drafted to promote safety tips during the spring black bear activity period. A post promoting these tips was also drafted for the Division's Facebook page.

The YouTube bear education and public safety video has undergone internal staff review. When finalized, the video will be placed 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 with the website development contractor to begin redesigning and modernizing the Division website.

### **Wildlife Habitat Supporter Donation Program**

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

### **Outreach Group**

Requests were submitted by Division staff via the Outreach Group Project Request form and were distributed to appropriate staff who can offer assistance with videography, photography and drone work.

Meetings were attended to discuss updating the Division's Representative/Delegate Program, Deer Classic event and Great Fishing Close to Home App.

A meeting was attended with the Green Acres Program to discuss collaborating on outreach opportunities for their upcoming 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

Content was requested from Division staff and compiled to develop infographics and videos about climate change impacts on New Jersey's wildlife from flooding and sea level rise. These outreach projects will be featured during DEP's Earth Week and will showcase the Division's efforts to combat threats to wildlife caused by climate change.

### **Other**

Meetings were attended to coordinate Division representation at the Rutgers University Virtual Career Fair. A PowerPoint presentation was developed along with a recruitment video for the event.

A DEP Communications Committee meeting was attended. Weekly bureau recap and social media posts meetings were also attended.