



## **BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

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

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

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

Thirteen hunter education class days were held during this reporting period, with 574 firearm students and 298 archery students attending the course. Hunter Education staff members continue to do inspiring work, conducting classes through the difficulties caused by the pandemic.

Staff responded to 67 duplicate Hunter Education issues during the report period.

Staff attended a four-part Hunter's Leadership Forum webinar series on "*How to Talk About Hunting*" sponsored by the National Rifle Association and Responsive Management (an internationally recognized public opinion and attitude survey research firm). Valuable information and updates were included in the webinar.

Staff attended the 2021 Northeast Hunter Education Administrators' Virtual Meeting. Information on how other northeastern states dealt with Covid-19 last year was a major topic of discussion.

The firearm inventory was updated to identify which guns in the program will be designated for melt down and which ones will be kept in service.

Staff reviewed and forwarded edits on a new range brochure to be released in the near future. An in-house meeting in June to discuss additional edits was also attended.

Both Hunter Education and R3 staff members spent a considerable amount of time developing, testing, and presenting a webinar entitled “*Locavore to the Core – NJ More than MEATS the Eye.*” Keynote speaker K. Griglak discussed the topics of what it means to be a locavore. Final edits to the program have been completed and posting of the future webinar will be completed by mid-May.

### **NASP® (Katie Paey)**

One NASP Basic Archery Instructor (BAI) Training was held this month. Eight new BAIs and one new school were certified.

One BAI Training has been scheduled for a new school at the end of May.

Two BAI Trainings are being scheduled at new schools for the end of May and June.

Assistance was provided to BAIs submitting annual NASP reports.

### **R3 (Joe Leskie, Ryan Risher, Brianna Merriel)**

Staff participated in a 3-day NEAFWA virtual conference, which included an R3 committee meeting.

Staff worked with the Bureaus of Fish and Wildlife Information Systems, Wildlife Management and Land Management along with the regional Ducks Unlimited biologist to finalize signage and lottery drawing boards for the Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area.

Staff assisted with the *2021 Women's Mentored Turkey Hunt* in Cumberland County. The workshop was hosted in partnership with the Landis Sewerage Authority (Vineland), National Wild Turkey Federation, NJ State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs and Good Sports Gun Club (Millville). The successful R3 event was positively rated by all involved. During the 3-day event, four participants harvested turkeys, and all gained valuable information to further their future hunting efforts. Thanks to all of the groups and mentors with special thanks to K. Byrne and J. Leskie for coordinating logistics. Thanks also to R3 and Hunter Education staff members R. Risher, B. Merriel and S. Forlenza as well as Bureau of Wildlife Management staff C. Venuti, J. Sloan, and L. Clark for their assistance in making the event a great success.

Staff participated in a virtual R3 forum that discussed new firearm owners and the Covid-19 quarantine. Information on ways to provide resources to new hunters, anglers and target shooters was also discussed.

Staff put together and dispersed its new R3 newsletter to the Division's Outdoors listserv. The publication, highlighting upcoming R3 events, will also be posted on the Division webpage and sent to recent hunter education graduates.

Staff completed the first draft of a 2020 Pheasant and Quail Stamp Buyers Survey that will be distributed via the listserv to pheasant and quail hunters.

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

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

A virtual intern staff meeting was held to meet new staff and update them on plans for the coming season.

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

Staff is developing a schedule of aquatic education programs to offer this summer as well as coordinating with Project Terrapin and the Conserve Wildlife Foundation's Osprey Project to offer Sedge interns additional research opportunities. Staff continues to explore online registration options that would help to streamline staff time.

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

The Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament will be held May 23 at Island Beach State Park. Registrations continue to be processed and information packets were assembled and mailed to those who registered early. This year, four high schools have registered for the tournament. At present, final preparations are underway.

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

Staff met with Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) representatives to discuss the next step for developing an agency-wide Angler R3 Plan.

Two hybrid surf fishing workshops were successfully held – one for 15 women and one for 12 veterans. Participants took part in a virtual meeting to learn the basics of surf fishing, and then met at Island Beach State Park for in-person instruction and actual surf fishing.

A surf fishing webinar is scheduled for May 21. This topic has been repeatedly requested on previous post-webinar surveys.

## **Green Eggs and Sand**

The Green Eggs and Sand workshop is being offered in partnership with The Wetlands Institute. A total of 18 educators registered for the hybrid workshop, which consists of videos, expert presenters and an overview of activities offered online. This workshop will highlight four teaching modules, and on Saturday, June 5, an in-person trip to a horseshoe crab spawning beach has been scheduled.

## **Other Activities**

The virtual women's turkey hunt workshop, offered in partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation's (NWTF) Women in the Outdoors (WITO) program concluded on April 25 with 32 women in attendance.

The Women's Mentored Turkey Hunt was held May 2-4. This mentored hunt was offered to nine women who had registered for the program in 2020, but had their workshop cancelled due to COVID-19. Sunday was a field session developed and coordinated by J. Leskie where participants patterned their shotguns, then cycled through stations on turkey calling, scouting and an introduction to hunting equipment. On Monday and Tuesday, students were paired with mentors from the Division of Fish and Wildlife, NWTF and NWTF-WITO to participate in an actual hunt. Over two mornings, four turkeys were harvested, but all participants had a quality hunting experience. Many thanks to J. Leskie for coordinating mentors, logistical planning and for serving as a mentor. Additional DFW staff who helped make this mentor hunt possible and deserve thanks are R. Risher, B. Merriel, C. Venuti, S. Forlenza, L. Clark and J. Sloan. Finally, thanks to the Landis Sewerage Authority (Vineland) for permitting the use of their property; Good Sports Gunning Club (Millville) for offering their facility to serve as a home base for the workshop; and the NJ Outdoor Alliance for providing meals.

Staff continues to pursue a virtual platform to offer educational program content. Staff met with Kalkomey Enterprises, LLC (a provider of recreational safety education online) to discuss assistance they could provide with workshop registrations. A price quote will be provided to the Aquatic Education Program in the near future.

Staff continues to provide support to the R3 program as needed.

Staff participated in the Rutgers University Tri-State Virtual Career Fair.

Staff attended the RBFF webinar *Retention Strategies Based on Angler Surveys*.

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

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

Five (5) new pages were posted this report period, including a “hidden” page for the Green Eggs and Sand Workshop. Seven (7) “News” pages were posted.

Approximately sixty-seven (67) pages were revised/updated during the report period, including multiple updates to the HOFNOD Youth Fishing Challenge page and the Spring Stocking Schedule, which was updated daily during the stocking season.

Twelve (12) images were edited and posted. Additionally, five (5) images for the Skillful Angler Leader Board were posted.

Approximately sixty-five (65) documents were edited in or converted to PDF format. These included: Council/Committee Documents (15 in three .zip files); Minutes/Agendas (11); Bureau Reports (9 in one .zip file); 2021 Marine Digest (7); and thirty-one (31) other documents.

### **Listserv Messages**

Nine (9) 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 April was 26,010; an average of 867 hits per day. It is a decrease of 44,148 hits from April 2020.

The ten most visited pages in April were: Fishing License Information – 32,634; License Information – 20,805; Regulations – 11,931; Saltwater Fishing – 10,772; Trout Stocking Schedule – 9,053; Striped Bass Bonus Program – 8,496; Trout Fishing Access – 6,664; Spring Trout Information – 6,640; License Agents – 5,433; and Turkey Information – 5,021.

Other popular pages were: Places to Fish – 4,890; Fluke Information – 4,784; Fishing Information – 4,751; Hunter Education – 4,704; Freshwater Fishing – 4,491; Contact Us – 4,193; Operation Game Thief – 4,121; Hunting – 3,870; Hunting License Information – 3,832; and Ranges – 3,811.

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

## **Responses to the Public**

Responses were made to approximately 280 e-mail messages, many concerning the spring trout season. Additionally, responses were sent to (26) referrals from the Assistant Commissioner's Office and eleven (11) messages from the DEP Public Access Center phone line.

## **Additional Activities**

Additional activities included virtual meetings concerning migration to WordPress; weekly social media meetings; and Commissioner's Updates. Several personnel actions pertaining to retirement were taken.

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

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

Route 46 Gate @ Pequest Closed 4/19

Division of Fish and Wildlife Updates – EARTH WEEK April 2021

NOV Postings –

Climate and Flood Resilience Program: Environmental Engineer Trainee; Environmental Services Trainee; and Planner Trainee

Office of Permitting and Project Navigation: Environmental Specialist 2 (Lateral)

Water Resource Management Program: Environmental Assistant (Hourly)

NOV Posting – Office of Permitting and Project Navigation: Project Coordinator (Lateral)

Division of Fish and Wildlife Updates – Week of April 26, 2021

NOV Posting – Division of Parks and Forestry: Program Specialist Trainee

April Bureau Reports

Division of Fish and Wildlife Updates – Week of May 3, 2021

Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice

NOV Posting – Division of Fish and Wildlife: Wildlife Worker

NOV Postings – DFW Marine Fisheries Administration: Principal Biologist

Virtual Division Meeting Wednesday, May 26 (**DRAFT**)

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

**Mother's Day May 9, 2021**

**Endangered Species Day May 21, 2021**

**Memorial Day May 31, 2021**

**Also, during this reporting period:** the Bureau of Information and Education's Monthly Report for April was compiled and edited; Commissioner's Team Meetings were remotely attended; a Division contact was found for the late Director George P. Howard's daughter regarding old publications; eagle scout letter templates were researched and forwarded to the Director's Office; the Division's Office of Fish and Wildlife Information Systems and the DEP Help Desk were

contacted on a computer black out issue; and a Bureau of Information and Education staff meeting was attended on May 6.

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

### **Publications/Graphics**

- Landowner/manager eagle brochure draft edited and under review
- Hunter's Chronic Wasting Disease brochure draft edited
- Flyer produced for staff recognition
- Email signatures finalized for Division staff
- Print-ready art for vinyl banners created for Holly Farm event
- Vector Green Acres logo created for event use
- Email headers/banners created for group email lists
- Vector logo versions created for use by staff
- Locavore program graphics created for webinar promotion on social media

### **Photography/Videography**

- Holly Farm images and video taken to document site transformation
- 95 photos in DFW email resource from the public were sorted, renamed, and saved
- Stock photo request fulfilled
- Capoolong Creek WMA video and stills taken and uploaded for staff
- Filming done on Green Acres property and uploaded for staff
- Filming request submitted for potential sites
- Trout stocking route followed; video and stills taken and shared for I&E staff use
- Unmanned Aerial Vehicle maintenance
- Internal, press and communications requests for photographs and logos fulfilled

### **Other**

- Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) group meetings attended
- Marine Fisheries logistics meeting attended
- Social Media coverage provided for Facebook and Instagram while staff was on leave; six posts made on each platform; responses to the public generated
- FAA Safety Part 107 Small UAS Recurrent Course training and test were successfully completed; certificates shared

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

### **Facebook**

The DFW Facebook (FB) page had **39,569 followers** and **37,346 likes** at the end of this reporting period.

Twenty-five (**25**) Facebook posts were posted in 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: conservation police officer (CPO) striped bass work, Buddy License, Earth Week content, Youth Turkey Hunt, Go Fish Fridays, R3 Mother's Day Event, Marine Digest, Young Wildlife Reminder, Deer Urine Lure Ban, Amphibian Week content, Sedge Boat Captain job opportunity, Locavore webinar, Marine Fisheries job opportunity, Bird of the Month, R3 Women's Mentored Turkey Hunting Workshop and Peace Officers Memorial Day Observance.

Six (**6**) Facebook stories were posted this period. Story topics included daily trout stocking locations and an area closure notice for the parking lot at Split Rock Reservoir.

**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):

**4/16** – CPO Striped Bass work - reached **158,903** people, **32,492** engagements.

**4/29** – Deer Urine Lure Ban - reached **55,472** people, **12,638** 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 **10,089 followers** at the end of this reporting period.

Nineteen (**19**) Instagram posts were posted this period. Posts include photographs and video taken by staff, and graphic pieces created for promotions.

Post topics included: CPO striped bass work, Buddy License, Youth Turkey Hunt, Happy Earth Day, Go Fish Fridays, Marine Digest, Young Wildlife Reminder, Deer Urine Lure Ban, Amphibian Week content, Bird of the Month, R3 Women's Mentored Turkey Hunting Workshop, Trout Stocking and Peace Officers Memorial Day Observance.

Eight (8) Instagram stories were posted this period. Story topics included daily trout stocking locations, area closure notice, swipe up for trout stocking allocation and Locavore webinar.



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

**4/16** – CPO Striped Bass work - reached **14,725** people.

**4/23** – Go Fish Friday (Muskellunge) - reached **6,133** people.

Staff monitored and responded to comments and private messages.

### **Other Activities**

- Participated in weekly Social Media/GovDelivery Planning Meetings 4/16, 4/23, 5/7 and 5/14.
- Attended the Bureau of Information and Education Staff Meeting 5/6.
- Met with Marine Fisheries Administration staff to discuss upcoming social media posts.

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

Staff continues to work with the Department of Treasury on a Request for Proposal (RFP) for building and installation of pre-designed exhibits.

The roof replacement project has started.

Facility grounds continue to be maintained. A new archery range sign was built and installed. Picnic tables are being rebuilt.

### **Trout in the Classroom**

Communication with teachers continues as school instruction vacillates between in-person and virtual.

A monthly newsletter was developed and sent out to teachers.

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

Staff attended an RBFF webinar on angling retention.

Staff continues to work on developing a train-the-trainer type program for angling education. An angling education program for students is also being developed.

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

### **Other**

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

A Volunteer Management 3 meeting series was attended.

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

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Fishing Challenge is scheduled for Free Fishing Day, June 5. With a few last-minute sites signing up, the event reached its maximum participation of 30 sites this year. Giveaways, prizes, and other materials are being picked up by host site coordinators.

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

Teams are beginning to gear up for the fishing season. Several have returned to in-person meetings, while others are planning to return in the coming weeks.

Pequest's annual Native Sapling Giveaway was scheduled for April 22-23. This year, the event drew unprecedented attendance on April 22. As a result, all plants were given away within the first two hours. Those who did not receive plants were given information about other plant giveaways in the state.

### **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 Bureau of Land Management was forwarded 150 bear safety signs for posting at wildlife management areas in the northern region.

A social media post offering safety tips during the spring black bear activity period was drafted for the Division's Facebook page and sent to the DEP's Communications Office for review.

The YouTube bear education and public safety video is undergoing 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. Information about the YouTube video was also posted on the Division website.

### **Division Website Development**

A website development meeting was attended to review the first draft of the freshwater fisheries narrative to be included on the new site.

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

A meeting was held to discuss development 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 could offer assistance with videography, photography, and drone work.

Meetings were attended to discuss marketing/promotional efforts involving the deer urine lure ban, Electronic Licensing System marketing module, general license sales and the upcoming Paulina Dam Restoration Project tour (Blairstown, Warren County) for the Acting Commissioner.

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

### **Other**

Division representation was provided at the Virtual Tri-State Career & Internship Fair Hosted by Rutgers University. A PowerPoint presentation was developed along with a recruitment video for the event.

Staff participated in the 76<sup>th</sup> annual Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Annual Conference. Weekly bureau recap and social media posts meetings were also attended.