

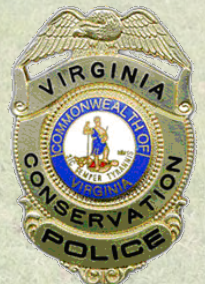
Virginia Conservation Police

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.



Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources
Law Enforcement Division
7870 Villa Park Drive, Suite 400
Henrico VA 23228



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.



** Complimentary patch affixed on printed version*

On behalf of the Virginia Conservation Police, this patch is shared with you as an appreciation of your support of our mission. The dedicated officers of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources have patrolled the fields, forests, and waters of the Commonwealth since 1903.

Through these efforts, and those of our community partners, we have endeavored to continue to protect the public, conserve Virginia's wildlife through appropriate enforcement of Virginia's wildlife laws, and connect people to Virginia's outdoors through public education and everyday interactions.

Our History



ON May 14, 1903, the Virginia General Assembly enacted legislation, during a special session, to establish a statewide system of wildlife law enforcement officers to deal specifically with wildlife crime. From that point through 2007, these officers were called game wardens, now known as Conservation Police Officers. (Visit: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/conservation-police/history/> to read about our full history protecting Virginia's wildlife)



TODAY'S Conservation Police Officers are highly motivated, independent, and well-trained members of the law enforcement community. We are often called upon by federal, state and local enforcement agencies to assist with various enforcement endeavors, due in part to their ability to deal with a complex array of issues in an expedient and professional manner. Whether working a youth fishing day, tracking a violent offender over rough terrain or providing law enforcement services in the wake of a natural disaster, Conservation Police Officers are always ready and willing to serve.

Conservation Police Officers are fully certified law enforcement officers through the Department of Criminal Justice Services, with the authority to enforce all of the laws of Virginia. As Deputy US Fish and Wildlife Special Agents, they may also conduct investigations and cross state lines when violations of federal wildlife laws have been committed.

The CPO Badge

The badge of the Virginia Conservation Police Officer represents those who have dedicated their lives to the protection of Virginia's wildlife and natural resources, as well as promoting a safe environment for anglers, hunters, boaters and other outdoor enthusiasts. To earn it requires comprehensive training and highly specialized skills, along with a passion for the outdoors and its wildlife.

Conservation Police Officers are fully certified sworn officers through the Department of Criminal Justice Services, with the authority to enforce all of the laws of Virginia. However, due to the unique nature of this law enforcement profession, those who wear it are unlike any other police officer.

Conservation Police Officer (CPO) perform their public service duties while taking on many different roles. These range from educator and ambassador to outdoor enthusiast; from evidence technician to boat collision reconstructionist; and from crime analyst to wildlife crime detective responsible for managing informants. CPOs also provide public safety and emergency response, sometimes during severe weather conditions, requiring that they put their lives on the line to rescue others.

Their workplace is geographically vast and diverse with modes of transportation that range from four-wheel drive vehicles to various types of boats. When comparing the duties of a CPO to those of a general police officer, one must keep in mind that the difference between these positions becomes the most evident where the pavement ends and fields and forests begin. CPOs frequently conduct foot patrols in remote areas, usually without back up and often under the cover of darkness. In these types of stressful situations, CPOs have an ability to use little more than their communication skills to shield them from wrongdoers as the "Protectors of Virginia's Wildlife and Natural Resources".

As per a portion of the Conservation Police Officer's Code of Ethics, we must:

"...maintain calm in the face of danger, scorn or ridicule; demonstrate self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others..."

Message from the Director

As with every year I've been fortunate to serve in this position, this Annual Report recounts some extraordinary accomplishments by our Law Enforcement Division. One



of my proudest days occurred last fall, when I had the opportunity to attend the meeting where this agency's VLEPSC Accreditation was considered and voted on. That day marked an important achievement for this agency; as the second largest law enforcement agency with statewide responsibilities in the Commonwealth, we had not been accredited for approximately three decades. Reversing that was a remarkable effort by our staff, who worked throughout the pandemic to complete the process on an even faster schedule than had been initially anticipated. The agency is forever grateful for the efforts that all of our staff put into this, and our Division and our Commonwealth are better off for what has been accomplished.

We also had the opportunity recently to celebrate the graduation of our newest Academy. These 22 new officers had been long anticipated, and we know that they will achieve great things as they begin their work with the agency. As with Accreditation, this was an effort that required our staff to overcome the impediments of the pandemic—first, in not being able to recruit on schedule; and then, conducting training with COVID-19 still being a very real concern. And they got it done. This class could not have come soon enough with vacancies in the field; our CPOs did an outstanding job filling the need in the meantime with limited numbers, and we hope they're never in that position again. As I write, our recruitment of the next class of CPO's is already underway, and we're looking forward to welcoming the successful candidates.

These are but two of many notable activities of our Law Enforcement Division that you will find detailed in the pages to follow. The opportunity to work with our officers remains one of the greatest privileges I've been afforded, and I look forward to all that we will see in the upcoming year.

Ryan Brown

Executive Director



Message from the Colonel

In my first full year as Colonel, it is evident that we are more forward focused and have built upon the values the Office of Professional Standards and the principles of law enforcement best practices. We continue to offer Quality Public Service at very high standards thanks to our outstanding VCP Officers and LE Staff. As an organization that desires to be an Employer of Choice, we spent this year wisely listening to our dedicated and passionate employees. We took their input and set proactive measures to meet our goals to include developing a VCP Roadmap with 50 Future Projects to be worked on in team settings.



We are building a strong foundation together that will allow us to grow and ultimately reach a level of staffing and training where we can not only effectively provide the services needed by the Commonwealth, but be an example to the nation. This year we built important cornerstones to our organizational structure, including establishing enhanced communications with our officers through a monthly VCP Rollcall Newsletter and detailed Command Staff Meeting Minutes combined with improved team collaboration; obtaining VLESPC Accreditation to implement and share best practices with other well-respected law enforcement agencies; and continuing a strong employee suggestion program. Through collaboration with our staff and leadership, we have, in the last year, developed and implemented a strategic roadmap. The roadmap includes important programs, such as a Leadership Development Continuum, which



helps meet our succession planning responsibilities. There is much work to do and next year we will add the final cornerstone, which is our new command structure and I am confident that the new leaders in positions, such as First Sergeant, will lead us forward successfully.

Within the pages of this Annual Report you will see many of our accomplishments where it is evident that we are the Protectors of Wildlife and Natural Resources as well as those who want to enjoy the great outdoors and all that it has to offer. It is certainly my honor and privilege to be the Chief of our Law Enforcement Division. While we continue to be in a transformational phase, I am confident that we will develop ourselves to be even more successful in our chosen profession and that we will be looked on by others as an example of excellence.

Colonel John J. Cobb - Chief of Law Enforcement

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1.0 Mission Summary

Virginia Conservation Police Officers operate within the Law Enforcement Division of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR). The mission of the Law Enforcement Division is to preserve law and order; to enforce applicable criminal and regulatory laws in a fair and impartial manner; to provide education and outreach in an effort to gain voluntary compliance with and promote public understanding and support of the Commonwealth's wildlife, fish and boat laws and regulations; to work in concert with other Agency divisions in accomplishing the Agency's mission; to provide responsive, coordinated services to the citizens of the Commonwealth in a professional, efficient manner.



Our 155 Conservation Police Officers focus their patrol efforts on enforcing the wildlife, fishing, and boating laws and regulations of Virginia. They utilize specialized law enforcement techniques and equipment to promote compliance, address criminal activity, and preserve public safety. Because of their knowledge and professionalism, officers are often called upon to assist other federal, state, and local agencies with various enforcement endeavors. Whether instructing a Hunter Education class, tracking a violent offender through remote terrain, or providing law enforcement

services in the wake of a natural disaster, Conservation Police Officers are dedicated to serving the citizens of the Commonwealth. The protection of Virginia's vast natural resources is a great undertaking. The Commonwealth is comprised of 95 counties, 38 independent cities, and a total area of 39,490 square miles. In 2021, Virginia was home to an estimated 8,642,274 citizens. From the Coastal shores, to the rolling hills of the Piedmont region, to the peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Virginia's topography is as diverse as its population. There are 371 rivers or creeks and 27 major lakes to explore. DWR also owns or manages 230 boat ramps to provide users with access to public waters. For the trout angler, Virginia contains over 3,500 miles of trout streams which includes over 2,900 miles of wild trout waters. Hunting and outdoors enthusiasts can recreate on the over 1.6 million acres of National Forest land found in Virginia. Additionally, there are 24 State Forests totaling over 68,626 acres managed by the Virginia Department of Forestry and 46 Wildlife Management Areas totaling over 203,000 acres managed by the DWR.



2.0 Administrative

2.1 Staffing

At the close of 2021, the Law Enforcement Division had 155 Conservation Police Officers including 117 non-supervisory field officers, 26 Sergeants, 6 Lieutenants, 3 Captains and 2 Majors and 1 Colonel. All were fully certified officers through the Department of Criminal Justice Services, with the authority to enforce all of the laws of Virginia. As Deputy US Fish and Wildlife Special Agents, they may conduct investigations and cross state lines when violations of federal wildlife

Table 1: Law Enforcement Staffing from 2017 to 2021

DESCRIPTION	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
CPO (Recruit and non-supervisory)	122	130	121	113	117
SERGEANT	17	26	22	21	26
LIEUTENANT	5	5	6	6	6
CAPTAIN	6	6	6	3	3
MAJOR/COLONEL	2	2	2	3	3
SWORN SUBTOTAL	152	169	157	146	155
DISPATCH	8	9	9	12	11
ADMIN/OFFICE - FULL TIME	8	7	7	8	9
PART-TIME	3	3	4	6	
IT SUPPORT	1	1	1	1	1
SUPPORT SUBTOTAL	20	20	21	27	27
TOTAL SWORN/SUPPORT (FULL-TIME)	172	189	178	173	173

laws have been committed. The Law Enforcement Division is also supported by 21 full-time and 3 part-time civilian positions which include dispatchers, administrative assistants, asset managers, records, and IT staff. Table 1 looks at the number of full-time sworn and support staff over the past five years.

2.2 Years of Service (2021)

At the end of 2021, the Law Enforcement Division had 173 full-time and three part-time employees. Figure 2 shows a five-year incremental breakdown of how long these employees have been with DWR.

Table 2 lists the names of the Law Enforcement personnel that have reached years of service milestones in 2021.

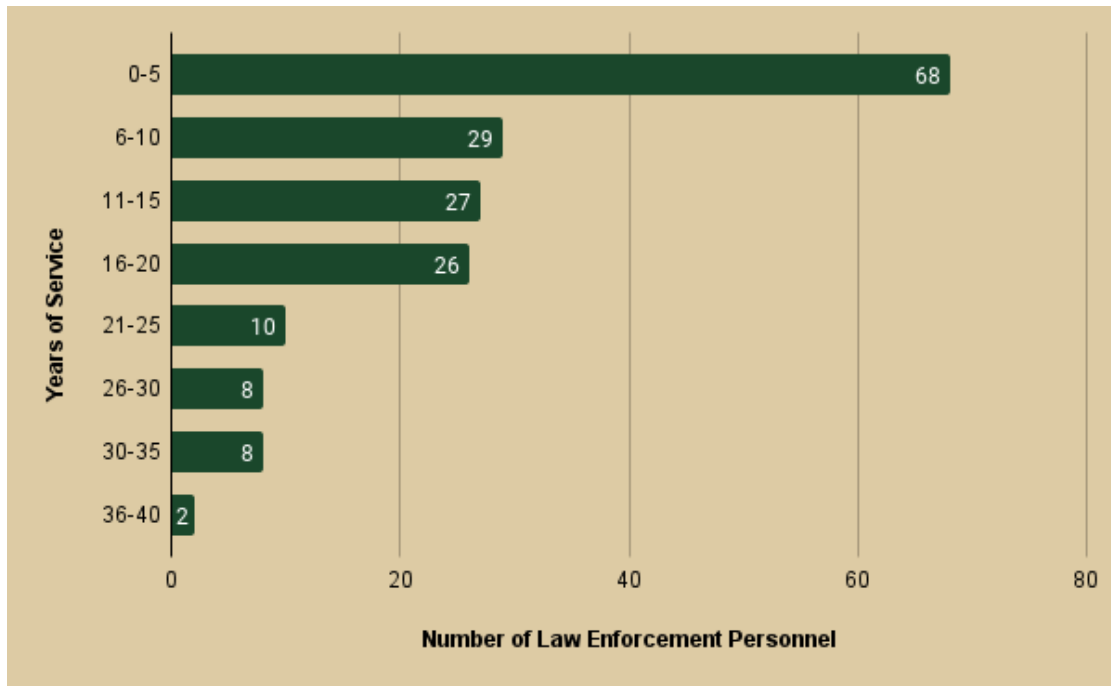


Table 2: Law Enforcement Personnel Years of Service Milestones (2021)

5 YEARS	15 YEARS	25 YEARS	30 YEARS
CPO Tim Bostic	Sgt. Tyler Bumgarner	Maj. Milt Robinson	
CPO Bonnie Braziel	CPO Cameron Dobyns		
CPO Jacob Chaffin	CPO Brandon Harris		
CPO Brandon Chester	CPO Mark Vandyke		
CPO Brett Clawson	Sgt. Sonny Nipper		
CPO John Daniel			
CPO Cory Gardner			
CPO Justin Hall			
CPO Cory Harbour			
CPO Dylan Harding			
CPO Zachary Howlett			
CPO Mathew Meade			
CPO Amanda Nevel			
CPO Katiana Quarles			
CPO Dan Rabago			
CPO Derrick Rickels			
CPO Chris Smith			
CPO Kevin Web			
Sgt. Joel Weidel			
CPO Bruce Young			
Disp. Sup. Kevin Leonard			



Figure 1: Years of Service Distribution



2.3 Budget

For most of this annual report, discussions revolve around calendar year reporting, which is not the case with budgets. State budgets operate on a fiscal year schedule from July 1 to June 30. The following lists an overview of the Law Enforcement Division's budget for the past four fiscal years - FY22 (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022) FY21 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021), FY20 (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020), and FY19 (July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019).

Table 3: Budget

Law Enforcement Budget	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22
Personnel Costs	\$16,239,511	\$16,195,852	\$16,574,540	\$16,050,771
Non-personnel Costs	\$3,844,072	\$3,948,906	\$3,659,611	\$4,588,549
Total	\$20,083,583	\$20,144,758	\$20,234,151	\$20,639,230



DWR's First Legal Compliance Officer

Paul Kugelman is the Legal Compliance Officer for DWR. He is the first person to occupy this newly created position. Paul primarily supports the Law Enforcement Division, bringing 25 years of legal experience to provide guidance and advice to DWR's accredited CPOs. He also liaises with the Attorney General's Office, and assists the agency in various other matters, including the regulatory process.



While he has been with the agency for around a year, Paul comes to DWR after 18 years with the Office of the Attorney General. There he served in various roles, including as counsel for the then DGIF and as the chief of the environmental section. Before law school, he served as an officer in the U.S. Navy.

Paul enjoys his role. He is impressed with the dedication of our Conservation Police Officers, who serve at the front lines of resource protection. He also enjoys the ride-alongs. So far, he has been on two boat patrols, ridden through two WMAs, and a day of fishing license checks, although many more of these experiences are planned for the future. Welcome aboard Paul!

3.0 Office of Professional Standards

The mission of the Office of Professional Standards (O.P.S.) is to utilize the best law enforcement practices, combined with risk management principles, in order to provide the highest level of quality service and public trust. To assist in this endeavor, we established the O.P.S. Advisory Council. The primary purpose of this council is to promote and set the example in terms of our Professional Standards CREED within the Law Enforcement Division of the Department of Wildlife Resources.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS CREED

Virginia Conservation Police (VCP) have a two-part creed regarding professional standards. Conservation Police Officers (CPOs) and law enforcement staff in our agency are expected to perform their public service with ethical core values. Furthermore, management and supervision are obligated to utilize best practices as their professional benchmark.

CORE VALUES = Ethical Behavior and Code of Conduct:

- I. *Act with integrity*
- II. *Render a high standard of public service*
- III. *Perform in a way that promotes trust in our profession*
- IV. *Treat others impartially with dignity and respect*
- V. *Take responsibility for one's actions*

PROFESSIONAL CRITERIA = Best Practices Management Model:

- I. *Create an inclusive, diverse and cohesive team environment to fulfill our agency mission*
- II. *Provide both the strategic direction and the necessary tools to be successful*
- III. *Follow accepted standards to measure our public service delivery system*
- IV. *Employ proactive and collaborative efforts to enhance effectiveness and reduce risk*
- V. *Communicate and implement change in a positive and constructive manner*

The O.P.S. Advisory Council consists of a fifteen-member team, which provides guidance and insight over recruitment/retention, training and administrative investigations. The Council makes recommendations to senior leadership utilizing the best practices of successful police operations. In addition, the Council will use acceptable standards to consistently measure our public service delivery system, and oversee a collaborative effort to address effectiveness issues and liability concerns, which require corrective action using agency staff and resources.

“There are obligations to treat staff fairly and to be seen as an employer of choice, thus the highest standards must be applied to internal processes as well.”

Directorate of Professional Standards, London's Metropolitan Police Service

O.P.S. ADVISORY COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- Serve as advisors and advocates for professional standards initiatives, including quality public service enhancements, to senior law enforcement leadership
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of public service and the effectiveness of strategies implemented to raise professional standards within the Law Enforcement Division

- Establish working relationships with other well-respected law enforcement agencies
- Research and stay up-to-date on new law enforcement trends and case law
- Market and showcase the uniqueness of our law enforcement profession to include maintaining a Professional Standards Website for our constituents and the public
- Seek-out constructive citizen and staff feedback in order to identify deficiencies and discover new methods to reduce liability and enhance law enforcement operations
- Accept nominations from the field and review their recommendations to formally honor Constituent Supporters with a numbered O.P.S. Protector Challenge Coin
- Facilitate and ensure the continuous and effective implementation of the Law Enforcement Employee Suggestion Program as well as maintaining those databases
- Accept nominations and make selections for the Professionalism Decree (CPO / Law Enforcement Staff Annual Recognitions) to include the award presentation

Go to our Professional Standards Webpage at: dwr.virginia.gov/ops

3.1 Citizen Feedback System

A centralized Citizen Feedback System and workflow went operational on May 25, 2018 in conjunction with the official launch of the Office of Professional Standards (O.P.S.) website: dwr.virginia.gov/ops. This system was established within the Law Enforcement Division to collect, track and respond to all types of citizen feedback in the interest of quality public service. Officers and Staff were provided with both large and small informational printed cards to be given out to the public to obtain their feedback. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were initiated for handling feedback appropriately, by various positions.

In reference to Officer Commendations, the feedback system has allowed us to significantly increase the collection of positive interactions from the public's perspective with our officers and staff. In fact, from the beginning of this new system to the end of the first year (2018), we had a 286% increase in commendation. These records are now kept and maintained by O.P.S.

In Calendar Year 2021:

- Recorded 114 Total Citizen Feedbacks
- Maintained a 6 to 1 ratio of Officer Commendations to Officer Complaints

Officer Commendations:

- 99 total (42 through the website)
 - Region I – 30
 - Region II – 26
 - Region III – 11
 - Region IV – 22
 - Special Ops – 9
 - HQ (Dispatch)- 1

Officer Complaints:

- 15 total
- Enforcement action-related complaints were the most common
- 3 complaints were received after a summons
- Region I - 3; Region II - 6; Region III - 3; Region IV - 3; and Special Ops / HQ's - 0

Final Dispositions:

- 6 No Further Action
- 4 Verbal Counseling
- 2 Written Counseling
- 0 Unsubstantiated
- 2 Substantiated
- 1 Pending

Figure 2: Citizen Feedback**3.2 Employee Suggestion Program (E.S.P.)**

The purpose of the Employee Suggestion Program is to apply that segment of the Professional Standards Creed, which deals specifically with “management best practices”. In particular, going into the “inclusive, diverse and cohesive team environment” in order to “employ proactive and collaborative efforts to enhance effectiveness and reduce risk”. This is accomplished by focusing attention and building functional work groups on issues that would often enhance field operations. More importantly, it is using field level CPOs and Law Enforcement Staff with their knowledge, creativity, and innovation to make improvements within the entire division.

All employees of the DWR Law Enforcement Division are given the opportunity to submit constructive suggestions to the O.P.S. Advisory Council. The council facilitates feedback in one of two ways: providing the name of a project leader so that feedback can be submitted; or, the employee can submit an Employee Suggestion Form and send it to the council for consideration to be included as a new project. When the interest of

senior leadership and the necessary resources both exist to move a proposed project from a potential to active status, those that made the suggestion will be contacted and a team will be created to work on the new project towards an implementation target date set by the O.P.S. Advisory Council.

From inception to 12/31/2021:

- **38** Projects and work teams created, which has led to the completion of **31** projects, using group creativity and innovation to build upon those employee initiatives

Total of 2 Completed Project Titles **in 2021** included: Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Drones and the Facial Hair Work group

Figure 3: Employee Suggestion Program

3.3 Peer Support Team

In 2021, as glimpses of normalcy began to appear through the pall cast by the pandemic, the Virginia Conservation Police Peer Support team members were able to assist their co-workers as things began to open once again. The peer team members responded to critical incidents as well as offered a listening ear to employees that faced challenges throughout the year. Figure 2 shows the number of contacts broken down into general categories. The Virginia Conservation Peer Support team began building relationships with other Peer Support teams in the commonwealth, specifically the Virginia Law Enforcement Assistance Program.

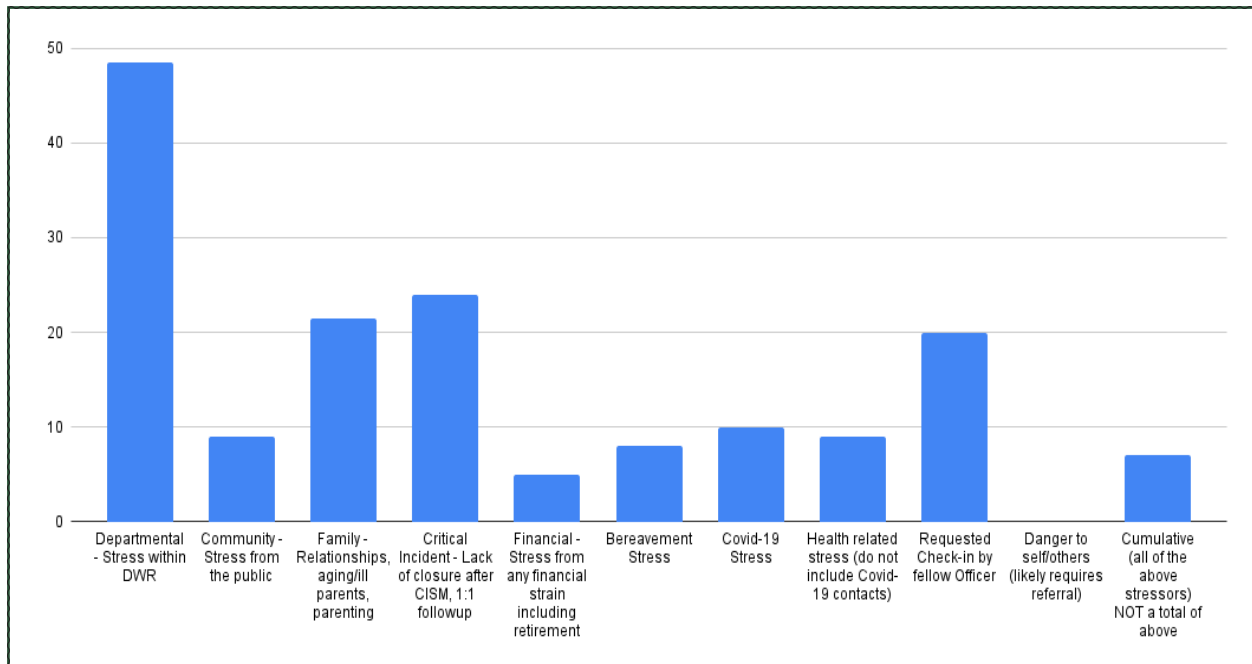
The Peer Team was successful in training 5 new peers in 2021!

The certified team currently consists of the following members:

- Region I: Sarah Druy , Amanda Nevel, Joe Rollings, and Cameron Dobyns
- Region II: Brandon Harris
- Region III: Eric Rorabaugh
- Region IV: Tim Bostic, Chance Dobbs, Greg Goff, Justin Sumpter and Derrick Kekic
- HQ: Rob Ham, Mike Hill, and Kevin Leonard
- Mental Health Clinician: Dawn Linton, LCSW/Chaplin

To make contact with a peer team member, you may contact any team member directly or contact Rob Ham for assistance or referrals.

Figure 4: Peer Support Contacts 2021



VCP Peer Support Team

Care for those who love you, by caring for yourself when you need support. The Peer Support Team is here for you.

[Contact Information for Peer Team Members](#)

*Don't give in, don't ever give up.
We've been tested too, and now we're here to help.
Contact us for help.*



DWR's First Full-Time Administrative Investigation and Compliance Manager

Captain Angela Comer is the Law Division's new Administrative Investigations and Compliance Manager. From day one, Captain Comer was impressed with DWR's Law Enforcement Division. "DWR is a hidden gem in the law enforcement profession. I have been impressed by the knowledge and professionalism of the officers and consider what they do the ultimate example of community policing."

Captain Comer recently retired after 23 years of service to the Arlington County Police Department, where she worked on criminal investigations, policy development, legislature affairs, strategic planning, administrative investigations, human resource management, community engagement, and inspectional services, developing an impressive skill set through her service at a major metropolitan police department.



Captain Comer holds a Master of Science Degree (Troy University) in Criminal Justice, a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Government and International Politics (George Mason University) and is a recent graduate of the School of Police Staff and Command (Northwestern University). Her experience in law enforcement is highly valued, and she is currently in the process of shaping the Office of Professions Standards in many positive ways. "I plan to get out in the field to meet officers and regional leadership to experience what they do and get a better understanding of agency operations. In my office, I am working on creating guidelines and structure for all administrative investigations, assisting with leadership development and recruitment projects, and helping out in any way that I can."

Outside of work, Captain Comer is a former foster mother and the current mother of four adult children. Captain Comer spent her childhood summers on the family farm in Halifax, NC where she developed a love for the outdoors, fishing, and sports.

3.4 Accreditation

VLEPSC Initial Assessment *A Continuous Pursuit of Excellence*

On August 10th, 2021, the Law Enforcement Division of the Department of Wildlife Resources welcomed the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC) assessment team for the initial accreditation assessment. During the three day event the assessment team was shown the unique law enforcement service that Virginia Conservation Police Officers offer to the Commonwealth of Virginia. The on-site assessment began at Osbourne Landing in Henrico County. Twenty-Two officers participated in the static display. The assessors noted that “all agency personnel that participated in the static display were knowledgeable and were able to provide thorough explanations”. The team was then taken on a ride-a-long component with an on-water patrol of the James River. Over the following days the assessment team completed a thorough file review of the division’s written directives and proofs of compliance with the 190 VLEPSC Standards as well as a Property and Evidence Verification Component.



On September 9th, 2021, the Law Enforcement Division was unanimously approved for accreditation by the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission.

“Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives.”

— Will A. Foster





The Commission's goals include the following: To increase the effectiveness and efficiency of law enforcement agencies in the Commonwealth through the delivery of services; To promote cooperation among all components in the criminal justice system; To ensure the appropriate level of training for law enforcement personnel; To promote public confidence in law enforcement; and To promote the professionalism of law enforcement agencies in the Commonwealth of Virginia.



NASBLA Re-Accreditation

A Continuous Pursuit of Excellence on the Waterways of Virginia



Virginia DWR was re-accredited by NASBLA in 2021 implementing General Orders that met or exceeded the program requirements as well as implementing training standards and performance task based upon NASBLA guidelines. This accreditation ensures readiness of the Virginia Conservation Police Officer boat crews and their ability to conduct missions on our Virginia waterways safely and effectively. Having Virginia's Conservation Police Officers trained to a United States Coast

Guard and FEMA recognized standard creates seamless inter-agency operations within our maritime homeland security framework.



The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) through its Boat Operations and Training (BOAT) Program will provide its Consultation, Assessment, and Accreditation Process (CAAP) to an agency, department or unit, of their maritime training policies, procedures, curricula, qualification process and documentation to ensure alignment with the BOAT Program National Standard, and interoperability with marine units across the country in the following applicable capabilities: Boat Crew Member, Boat Operator for Search and Rescue, Enhanced Vessel Operator, Tactical Operator, Pursuit Operator, Fire Boat Small, BUI, Accident Investigation, Small Vessel Radiological-Nuclear Detection Operator and any other discipline the National Director authorizes an agency to teach.



3.5 Recruitment

The Training and Recruiting Section had to alter the way it reached prospective applicants in the community due to COVID-19. Recruiters increased their use of social media and other non-standard methods. A series of videos were shared through the DWR social media platforms that highlighted the conservation police officer career. A new segment called CPO Spotlight featured several of our officers and shared some of their backgrounds and why they joined the DWR team. The response to this initiative was positive and led to an increase in recruiting information inquiries.



The Division's recruiters make themselves available to speak with prospective candidates and discuss the career, hiring process, and the officer training program. These discussions often last 30 minutes or more. Anyone who is interested in joining the DWR team as a Conservation Police Officer can receive additional information by emailing recruiter@dwr.virginia.gov. Prospective applicants can also visit the CPO Recruiting website, <https://dwr.virginia.gov/conservation-police/recruiting/>. There, visitors can find updated information and answers to many frequently asked questions.

3.6 Training

The Training and Recruiting section actively provides training to its officers in a variety of subject areas.

11th Basic and Modified Academy

The 11th Basic and Modified Training Academies began in September of 2021. The Division hired 23 new officers to fill vacancies throughout the Commonwealth. DWR undertook establishing its own academy in 2004 in order to tailor the law enforcement training program to our officers' specific needs and unique responsibilities. Conservation Police Officers must successfully complete training in a wide array of skills including fish identification,



firearm proficiency, crime scene investigations, control tactics, tactical tracking, impaired driving enforcement, and operating watercraft and patrol vehicles.



Boat Crew Member Course

As Virginia's primary marine law enforcement agency, DWR has an active training program to address the needs of our officers as well as those of our partner agencies. DWR is a National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) accredited agency. Through this accreditation, our credentialed instructors are able to present training in several areas of boat operation and investigation. In July, DWR presented the Boat Crew Member Course to some of our officers and those of our partner law enforcement agencies.



This national standard course presented the fundamentals of boat operation and is based on the USCG Seamanship Manual. This 5 day class provided the opportunity for the participants to improve their individual skills. Students in this class were assigned to some of the most popular waterways in Virginia, including Smith Mountain Lake, Lake Anna, and Kerr Reservoir.

Boat Incident Investigation Training

DWR hosted the NASBLA Level 1 Comprehensive Boat Incident Investigation course in April of 2021. This was a multi-agency course, and provided the attending officers with the knowledge necessary to identify and document damage from a marine collision. The course was presented by DWR and NASBLA contracted instructors. The 2021 Recreational Boating Incident Investigation Summary was recently released and highlights the importance of this training.

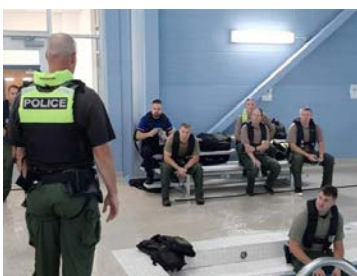
2021 Virginia Boating Incident Summary

- Number of Incidents = 89
- Number of Vessels Involved = 115
- Number of Injured Persons = 47
- Number of Fatalities = 19
- Alcohol was a known factor in 16% of fatal incidents.
- Canoes and kayaks were involved in 32% of fatal incidents.
- In 84% of fatal incidents no life jacket was worn
- Property Damage = \$ 624,887



Figure 5: 2021 Virginia Boating Incident Summary

Officer Water Survival



DWR began offering the NASBLA Officer Water Survival course to our officers in 2021. This 2 day course was delivered in accordance with the NASBLA's Boat Operations and Training Program standards. It provides our officers with the skills to survive in and on the water. This course prepares the officer for the unexpected immersion into the water. A key element of this course is the preparation of participants to become proficient in water survival skills and awareness on how to use their duty gear and survival equipment to increase their chances of survival. Course participants practice swimming, treading water and other drills while wearing their body armor and a simulated duty belt. This course is physically challenging and uses freestyle stroke, breaststroke, sidestroke and swimming under water.

Supervisor In-service

In 2021, all of our conservation police supervisors attended their bi-annual in-service training. This training was held at our headquarters and featured presenters from DWR, VCU and the private sector. Areas covered included VLEPSC Accreditation, Mental Health First Aid, a workshop on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and human resources topics.

Impaired Driving Enforcement Training Refresher

Recognizing the importance and complex nature of law enforcement responsibilities, the division provides regular training throughout the year.

In 2021, a block of training was provided that included standardized field sobriety tests (SFST). The SFST refresher stressed the importance of understanding the evaluation criteria and included a skills demonstration. Regular refresher training in this area provides the knowledge base necessary for our officers to enforce impaired driving laws on the water and on the highways.



4.0 Law Support Services

4.1 Communication Center: 2021

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) continues to operate a 24 hour, 7 days a week Law Enforcement Communications Center. Our staffing levels have maintained consistency with 10 full time dispatch positions

Table 4: Dispatch Summary From 2017 to 2021

DESCRIPTION	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total CAD Calls for Service	44,063	48,442	58,734	57,409	50,134
Crimeline Reports	4,136	2,170	5,090	5,836	6,065
Environmental Issues/Fish Kills	69	205	206	185	225
Wildlife Nuisance/Permits/Injured related calls	6,566	5,932	6,748	5,185	4,734
CPO/Ranger Patrols	20,968	21,106	25,133	24,864	19,643
Hunt/Boat/Fish/Trapping Violation Type Calls	7,084	6,414	5,226	6,460	5,650
General / Traffic Violations	916	1,594	1,828	1,003	788
Service-Related Type Calls	3,178	2,757	3,994	3,287	3,098
Hunt Incident Reports	17	31	34	32	36
Boat Accident/Sinking/Drowning Reports	126	100	98	79	128
Distress/Overdue Hunters, Fishermen or Boaters	98	149	223	331	204
Accidents Involving DWR Persons/Equipment	17	22	27	32	1
Criminal Investigations/Complaints	419	620	358	924	78
Stolen Property Reports/Investigations (Boat, other, etc.)	130	101	109	73	58
Abandoned or Recovered Boats	149	220	177	279	170

*CFS may contain more than 1 incident code therefore totals may add up to more than the actual number of calls for service.

and 2 dispatcher supervisors. The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Communications Center provides support throughout the entire Commonwealth, not only for all the DWR personnel and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) State Park Rangers, but 2021 saw the addition of the Virginia Department of Forestry using our center as an emergency contact for high risk situations.

Overall calls for service were down 13% in 2021. From a high of 58,734 calls created in 2019, to 57,409 calls in 2020, this decreasing trend continued to 50,136 in 2021 and can most likely be attributed to the reduced number of Conservation Officers in the field due to retirements and other factors.



Lastly, the Communications Center, in coordination with the Office of Professional Standards, recognized the 2021 Dispatcher of the Year, Deborah Wilmoth. Communications Officer Wilmoth joined the DWR Law Enforcement Division in 2008 with prior experience as a communications officer. As a senior dispatcher Debbie has stepped up and provided direction where appropriate and has led the shift to ensure officer safety when dispatching units into potentially hazardous situations. She has been recognized by officers and leadership alike for her attention to detail and for her caring demeanor when speaking to the Conservation Police Officers and the constituents of the Commonwealth.

4.2 Records Program

2021 was the third full year the Conservation Police utilized the Central Square Technologies' Zuercher Suite (Zuercher) records management system as its sole resource for tracking crime data. This product functions on case-centric reporting. Zuercher affords the division a sophisticated tool encompassing a vast array of functions and database groups: CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch); case management, Master Name database; and GEO validation capabilities.

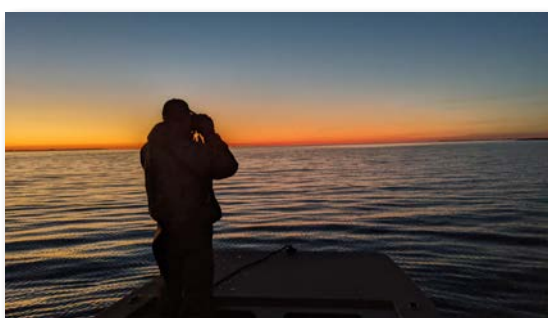
The Law Records Program is responsible for the Records Management System (RMS) aspects of managing the case-based data. A fundamental focus of Law Records is to support system development and maintenance while striving to ensure data accuracy and acting as a primary source for data edits. As mandated by the state of Virginia, we submit our records containing offenses to the FBI through the Virginia State Police using a National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Based on these criminal records, the division makes continual contributions to the Naval Criminal Investigative Service's (NCIS) Law Enforcement Information Exchange (LInX) system.

Law Records developed and initiated processes within Zuercher establishing specialized case types used to support other agency divisions in their data collection and program

Table 5: Records Management System (RMS) Summary from 2017- 2021

RMS Summary	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
All Case Types*			10,933	9,538	7,937
Investigative Cases	6,902	5,419	8,412	6,602	5,345
Arrests	8,656	6,814	6,676	6,371	3,180

management. Each case type has a unique case indicator, permission rights, data collection forms, and workflows customized for specified user groups. Development included a centralized method for groups to request specific services of our officers in the field. Via this incorporated tool, user groups are able to uniformly work in tangent with our Dispatch center to issue and manage requests for officer services.



Within these dedicated cases, group users create a case for each request having the ability to communicate directly with our officers. The system offers the group a window in which they can follow the progress of each request. This aspect alone creates a higher level of efficiency in virtually eliminating additional support by our Dispatch center and other communicative actions required to determine request status. Agency functions involved in this customized portion of our program are inspections for Boat HIN/Dealer (soft roll-out December 2019), Wildlife Rehabilitation, Foxhound Training Preserves, Licensed Shooting Preserves, Shoot from the Vehicle Permits and Wildlife Kill Permits/DCAP. The largest and most complex functions involve wildlife's program for Wildlife Kill Permits/DCAP. Multiple fragmented elements of the

Table 6: Non-Offense Case types in 2021

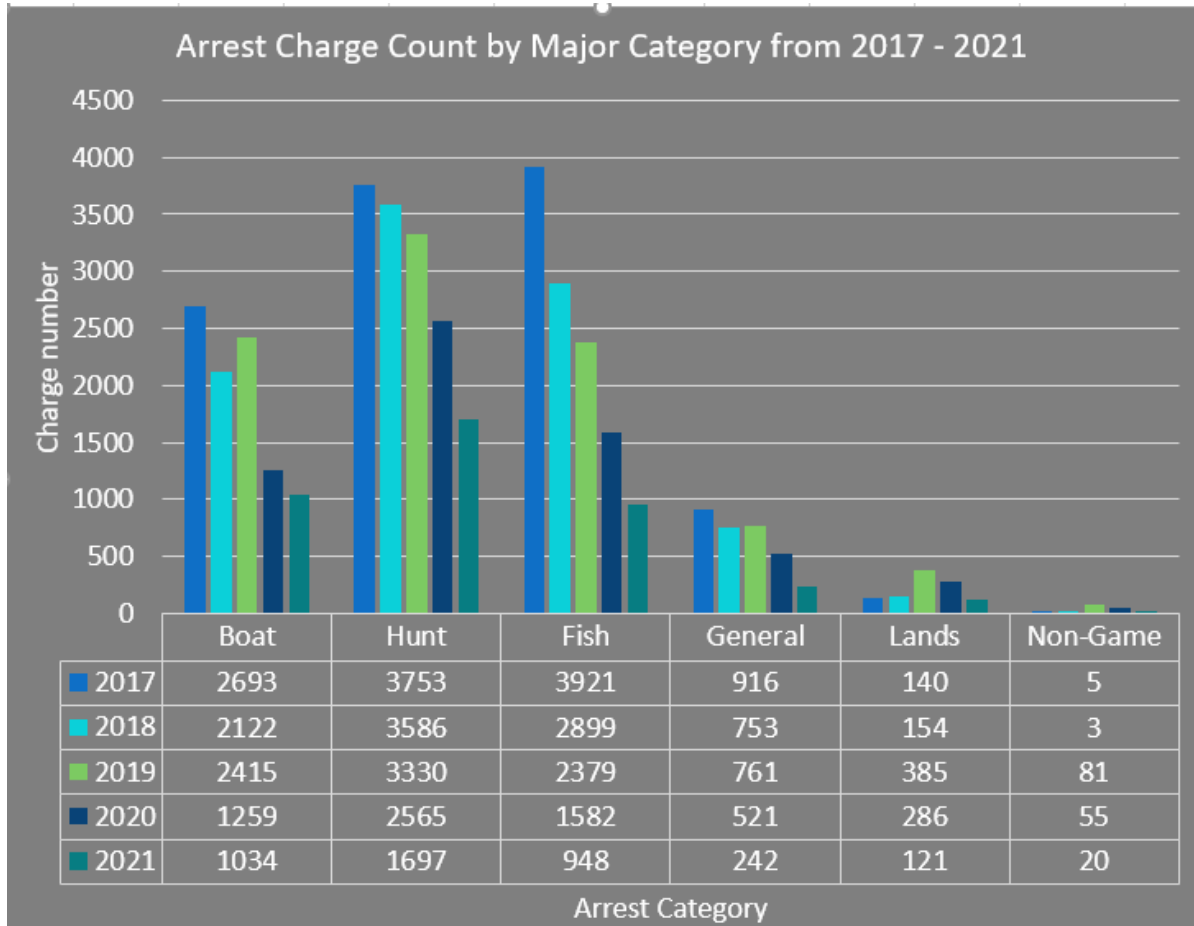
Case Types (non-offense)	2019	2020	2021
Animal Rehabilitation	18	33	42
Boat Section	13	172	127
Foxhound Training Preserve	30	29	30
Licensed Shooting Preserve	11	125	14
Records Data Request		263	271
Shoot from Vehicle Permit	46	26	26
Waterway Marker		16	16
Wildlife Kill Permit/DCAP	2,164	2,219	2015
Total Records	2,282	2,883	2592



Wildlife Kill Permits/DCAP program were incorporated into a single comprehensive management tool. Wildlife personnel, Dispatch, officers, Complementary Workforce volunteers, and even constituents have been empowered by the ability to access the process on varying levels. The extensive and complex information submitted by all of our Zuercher users is essential to documenting and supporting the agency's mission to the state's wildlife and constituents. Zuercher has vast potential to develop additional agency processes.

In 2021, the impact of the Covid-19 virus affected Conservation Police activities in various aspects as it did with the whole nation. With mandatory state and national restrictions placed on social interactions during the majority of the year, officers' interactions with the public reduced. Summarizing arrest charges within a case gives a view of the hunting, boating and fishing criminal activity that occurs across the Commonwealth.

Figure 5: Arrest Charge Count by Major Category from 2017-2021



Statutes within the database can be queried by subcategories based on relatedness such as trespassing, license, season, safety, etc. The charge data shown below is reflective of these categories.

Table 7: RMS Arrest Charge Breakdown by Minor Category from 2017-2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
License Fish	3,102	2,359	1,810	1,126	812
License Hunt *					422
Safety - Boat	1,791	1,474	1,619	907	793
Season - Hunt	1,516	1,397	1,257	1,017	654
Hunt - Safety *					252
Trespass	717	531	614	506	304
License - Boat	745	477	579	256	355
Traffic	299	391	414	271	159
Safety - Other	182	306	379	402	251
Season - Fish	362	254	288	207	131
Drug - Marijuana	228	204	155	53	36
Drug Other *					96
Littering	193	191	153	0	47
Firearm	364	159	142	105	415
Other	101	113	130	128	331
Alcohol - Other	146	106	94	60	115
Fraud	75	67	73	53	144
Alcohol - BUI	42	44	53	28	139
Alcohol - DUI	25	44	42	19	97
Damage	20	33	33	29	14
Elude/Impede	22	22	25	18	5
Larceny	28	14	14	17	78
Alcohol - HUI	0	4	12	4	0
Assault	4	2	6	5	3
Totals	9,962	8,192	7,892	5,211	5,653
* New Category 2021					

The top ten violations resulting in a summons issued in 2021 are listed below. The top two violations have consistently held their rank since 2015. This year Annual Access permit for Dept. owned lands violations moved up 3 levels from its 2019 ranking and Regulatory Markers and Aids to Navigation is new to the list.

Table 8: Top 10 Arrest Charges Issued in 2021 by Conservation Police

RANK	CODE DESCRIPTION	CODE	2021
1	LICENSE: FISH W/O FRESHWATER LICENSE	29.1-335(FRESH)	685
2	WATERCRAFT: PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES REQUIRED	4VAC15-430-30	451
3	TRESPASS: TRESPASS BY HUNTERS AND FISHERS	18.2-132	181
4	LICENSE: HUNT W/O LICENSE	29.1-335(HUNT)	139
5	TO HUNT OVER A BAITED AREA	29.1-521(4)	139
6	HUNTING IN MANNER NOT PERMITTED BY LAW	29.1-521(10)	113
7	LICENSE: HUNT W/O DEER/TURKEY LICENSE	29.1-335(DEER/TUR-KEY)	110
8	REGULATORY MARKERS AND AIDS TO NAVIGATION	4VAC15-370-50	87
9	GAME/FISH: TAKE OR ATTEMPT TO TAKE DURING CLOSED SEASON	29.1-550(i)	83
10	LICENSE: FISH W/O STOCKED TROUT LICENSE	29.1-335(TROUT)	82

As a Virginia Law Enforcement Agency, DWR participates in the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) program with the FBI. The state repository for this data is through Virginia State Police's (VSP) Incident Based Reporting Program (IBR). Each month DWR submits crime data from RMS using the IBR format required by VSP. VSP utilizes this collected data to publish the Crime in Virginia report every year based on Uniform Crime Report (UCR) codes. Based on the NIBRS system, most of what Conservation Police Officers enforce falls under the UCR code 90Z, "All Other Offenses" (6,844 offenses in 2020). Due to the ambiguity of the 90Z designation, which can include anything from illegal possession of wildlife to not having a fire extinguisher on a vessel, the Law Division created the major and minor categories, reflected previously, to help focus on DWR's mission and goals.



4.2.1 Wildlife and Boat Revocations

Law Records is responsible for submitting wildlife revocations to the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact (IWVC) database, which is also state mandated. On December 1, 2011, the Board of IWVC administrators accepted DWR's application to become a member. DWR has been contributing Virginia wildlife revocations into the IWVC database since 2014. Law Records staff regularly download IWVC data containing revocations associated with wildlife violations submitted by the 48 U.S. member states.

Boating revocations records are also the responsibility of Law Records. This type of revocation is managed via a customized divisional dedicated IT process. As with the wildlife revocations, Zuercher is the starting point to document a revocation. Officers initially update the associated case with relevant revocation information. Auto generated notifications are issued to Law Records personnel to continue processing the revocation data. Ultimately, an "alert" associated with each revocation is created within Zuercher. The alerts display a visual indicator, automatically deactivated on the expiration date of the restriction. This information can be instrumental in a CPO's first contact with an offender/suspect and potentially used to support charge presentations in the judicial system.

Table 9: Revocations entered into the Revocation Database from 2017 to 2021

Revocations Entered	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
VA Hunt	94	93	94	64	91
VA Fish	4	2	5	12	1
VA Boat	22	9	13	7	3
Total VA Revocations	120	104	112	83	95
Other State Revocations Ratified	5,150	7,246	5,591	5,470	4,693
TOTAL REVOCATIONS	5,270	7,350	5,703	5,553	4,788



4.2.2 Community Policing Data Collection

Effective July 1, 2020, the Virginia Department of State Police, Uniform Crime Reporting Unit began the collection of investigatory stop data based on the creation of the Community Policing Act. Updates to the original legislation were made per Chapter 37 of the 2020 Special Session I. Data from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 include only those persons stopped while driving. Data from July 1, 2021 and on will contain all persons subject to an investigatory (nonconsensual) stop.



Table 10: Community Policing Data 2021

Reason For Stop	Arrest	Summons	No Action	Warning	Total
Call for Service	1	29	44	173	247
Check Point		3			3
Equipment Violation		3	10	96	109
Other	8	98	129	671	906
Terry Stop		7	9	82	98
Traffic Violations	8	81	14	161	264

§ 52-30.2. Prohibited practices; collection of data.

A. No State Police officer shall engage in bias-based profiling in the performance of his official duties.

B. State Police officers shall collect data pertaining to (i) all investigatory motor vehicle stops, (ii) all stop-and-frisks of a person based on reasonable suspicion, and (iii) all other investigatory detentions that do not result in an arrest or the issuance of a summons to be reported into the Community Policing Reporting Database. State Police officers shall submit the data to their commanding officers, who shall forward it to the Superintendent of State Police.

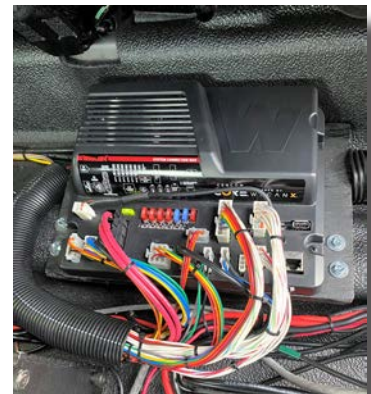
C. Each time a law-enforcement officer or State Police officer stops a driver of a motor vehicle, stops and frisks a person based on reasonable suspicion, or temporarily detains a person during any other investigatory stop, such officer shall collect the following data based on the officer's observation or information provided to the officer by the driver: (i) the race, ethnicity, age, gender of the person stopped, and whether the person stopped spoke English; (ii) the reason for the stop; (iii) the location of the stop; (iv) whether a warning, written citation, or summons was issued or whether any person was arrested; (v) if a warning, written citation, or summons was issued or an arrest was made, the warning provided, violation charged, or crime charged; (vi) whether the vehicle or any person was searched; and (vii) whether the law-enforcement officer or State Police officer used physical force against any person and whether any person used physical force against any officers.

4.3 Fleet and Asset Management

Fleet Management, as everyone, had a very challenging year in 2021. Supply Chain issues continued to plague the vehicle and equipment procurement process throughout the year, making it extremely difficult to upfit and issue new vehicles in a timely manner. Nine Ford F250s and 9 Ram 1500 pickups were purchased, upfitted, and issued to the field. The following list describes some of the highlights that were accomplished during the year:



- Coordinated with Virginia State Police (VSP) in the decommissioning of surplus vehicles and continued internal decommissioning of selected vehicles and boats.
- Continued to salvage parts, including tires, from surplus vehicles to replace broken/worn out parts on law enforcement fleet vehicles to provide cost reduction for the department.
- Conducted removal of vehicle and boat decals to increase cost savings.
- Attended UARC meetings to fulfill Agency attendance requirements.
- Completed mandatory VSP STARS Equipment Audit.
- Updated vehicle emergency lights with addition of RED/BLUE/WHITE lights.
- Utilized Remote controlled Spot Lights (ARGES) on all new installations.
- Utilized Whelen "CORE" light controllers that provide the ability to create unique functionality of emergency lights and radio equipment.



5.0 Specialty Teams

5.1 K9 Team





2021 brought more changes to the DWR K9 Unit. Long time officer and K9 Handler Wes Billings' received a well-deserved promotion to field Sergeant in Region 3, leaving an opening for new handler for K9 Molly. The position was advertised and Officer Jacob Chaffin was selected to be that new handler.

After some unforeseen circumstances, Officer Mark VanDyke's K9 partner Avery was placed in to retirement. We immediately went in to search mode for a new K9 partner for Mark and located a very high energy Red Lab puppy. This puppy, in honor to our Southwestern Virginia coal history, was ultimately named

Coal.

Officer Chaffin and K9 partner Molly, along with Officer VanDyke will be attending the Indiana Canine Conservation Academy from February – May 2022. This school will consist of 3 – 3 week sessions over a 15 week period and will be taught by veteran K9 instructor Officer Jeff Milnor and Officer Lance Labonte of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Virginia CPO Richard Howald will also be instructing part of the course.



Officer VanDyke and K9 Coal will be trained in tracking, evidence/article detection, and wildlife detection. Officer Chaffin and K9 Molly will not train in wildlife detection, as they pick up on the Human Remains Detection training that Officer Billings and Molly had been working on over the last year.

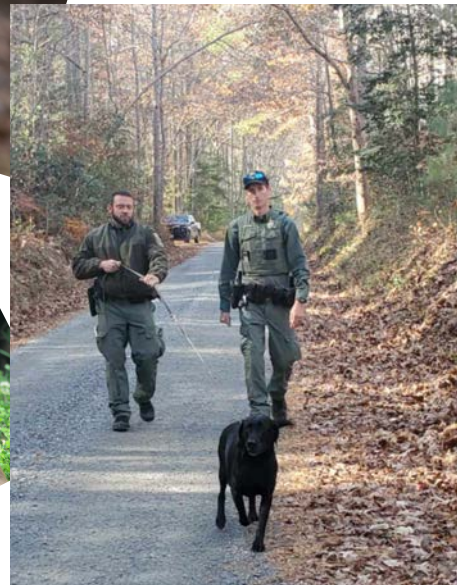
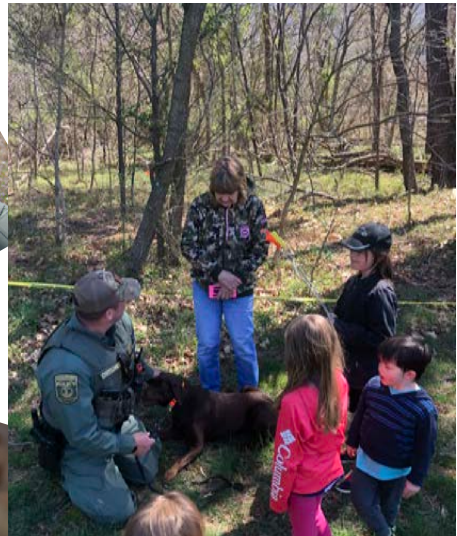


After an almost back to normal year after COVID, the K9 Unit's public appearances increased from 14 events to 82. This allowed us to get back to our pre-Covid average and we were able to get out and promote the Unit, the Division, and the Agency.

The following table contains summary information for the K9 unit since 2014 and includes a snapshot of what Senior Officer Billings and K9 Molly, Officer Tyler Blanks and K9 Bruno, Officer Bonnie Braziel and K9 Grace, Master Officer Mark DiLuigi and K9 Lily, Senior Officer Richard Howald and K9 Sky, Officer Ian Ostlund and K9 Reese, Officer Jim Patrillo and K9 Bailey, and Officer Mark VanDyke and K9 Avery did during the calendar year 2021:

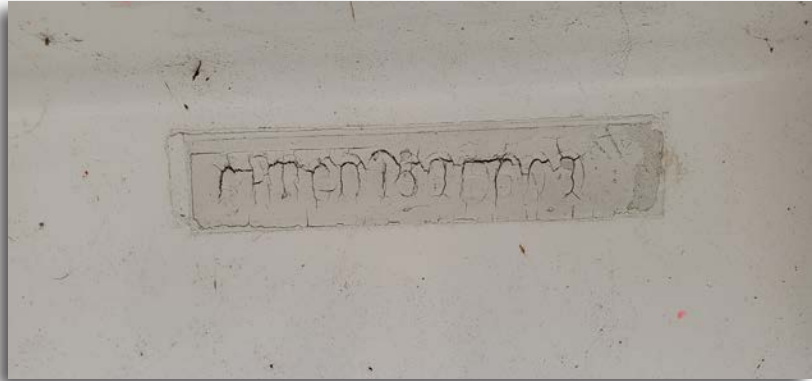
*Table 11: Summary for K-9 Activity from 2017 to 2021 (*separation of uses and patrols starting in 2018)*

DESCRIPTION	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
TOTAL USES	127	267	286	292	295
TOTAL PATROLS	*	182	195	277	576
PUBLIC APPEARANCE	60	85	89	14	82
TRACKS	52	63	71	74	91
WILDLIFE DETECTION	21	28	18	17	15
AREA SEARCH	42	51	63	177	116
NONSPECIFIC USE	35	40	45	10	2
HUMAN REMAINS DETECTION	-	-	-	1	4



5.2 Marine Theft and Fraud

In 2017, the Law Division recognized that it needed to address several growing problems- boat theft; fraudulent boat sale receipts, which often involve grossly underpaying taxes; and fraudulent boat registration applications. Special Agent Jim Croft, as part of the Special Operations Unit, had historically been tasked with investigating stolen boats. The cases he was becoming involved in and the information he was receiving, indicated that he was going to need assistance to effectively address these issues across the Commonwealth. The decision was made to assign two officers each year to work with Agent Croft. This would not only give him the much-needed assistance, but would provide a set of new skills and investigatory knowledge to the assisting officers so they could continue to identify and investigate marine-related thefts and frauds in their respective districts at the completion of their assignments. Through 2021, five officers have participated as members of the Unit, been involved



in significant cases and taken the Law Division's response to these types of crimes to a new level. In August, Paul Inge was assigned full-time to the unit.

During 2021 the Unit continued to work with a large caseload due to the increasing popularity of

boating from the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Due to that heavy call volume, Agents focused on more serious felony-level cases and targeted individuals who prey on new boaters or those maliciously misrepresenting purchase prices to evade paying taxes.

In 2021, 18 violations were identified of individuals misrepresenting purchase amounts to avoid paying watercraft sales & use tax, with some violations resulting in additional tax penalties paid to the fund due to the



significance of the misrepresentation. Specific metrics of the unit during 2021 include:

Table 12: Case Types from Boat Fraud Team

DESCRIPTION	2018	2019	2020	2021
CASES DEVELOPED	114	105	74	84
FELONY CHARGES	11	51	10	342
MISDEMEANOR CHARGES	55	24	28	22
WARNINGS	7	31	0	9
SEARCH WARRANTS	12	60	13	15
RECOVERED BOATS	11	21	6	13
RECOVERED TRAILERS	5	12	5	11
OTHER RECOVERED STOLEN ITEMS	1	1	0	1
IMPACT ON LOCAL TAXATION	\$90,000	\$90,000	-	\$194,600
TOTAL VALUE OF RECOVERED PROPERTY	\$241,000	\$334,000	-	\$214,275

Agents also continued to provide awareness training both within the Agency and outside the Agency. Several stakeholder training sessions were held with Sheriff's Offices to bring awareness to boat theft trends and strategies to identify stolen boats. Agents also conducted a training for all Commonwealth Attorneys at their yearly in-service training, bringing forward hurdles frequently faced in criminal cases and an awareness to the Unit and Agency's mission.



The unit's success is clearly evident from the data:

- During 2021 there were 17 stolen boats reported to the Agency from across the Commonwealth. During the same time frame, Agents recovered 13 stolen vessels. This recovery rate of 76% is well above the national average of 46%.
- Since the inception of the unit, vessel thefts in Virginia have decreased by 62% (2017: 45, 2018: 30, 2019: 20, 2020: 19, 2021: 17).

Virginia's stolen vessel decline is significantly more than the national average for the same time period (national average: decrease of approx. 6%/year)

The statistics for vessel thefts make Virginia a pleasurable and safe state for recreational boating and the Unit is proud to continue to work in keeping the downward trend to the betterment of the Commonwealth.



5.3 Tracking Team

The Virginia Conservation Police (VCP) tracking training program has been a popular course among local law enforcement agencies and VCP recruits. Tracking instructors provided 5 days of training to the 11th Basic VCP Academy in 2021. The VCP tracking training cadre were able to proceed with some of the requests that it receives annually. Tracking instructors worked with regional K9 units

in Southwest Virginia in 2022. Currently, the VCP tracking training cadre plans to provide training to Spotsylvania Search and Rescue teams.

The VCP tracking teams utilized the skills of 44 dedicated Officers who have taken on this extra responsibility in addition to their normal duties. The tracking teams added 10 VCP Officers who completed the necessary training in 2021. Tracking team members regularly train and work with a VCP K9 unit. Four tracking team members take on yet another responsibility as the regional team leader. Each team leader coordinates regular team training sessions and supervises regional operations as they arise. VCP tracking teams responded to several different incidents throughout the year including to assisting with a law enforcement shooting incident in Page County.

Current Regional tracking team leaders are:

Region 1: SR CPO Chris Gilmore

Region 3: CPO 1st Class Matt Arnold

Region 2: CPO 1st Class Tyler Routon

Region 4: Sgt. Chance Dobbs

5.4 Honor Guard

Breaking free from the pandemic the VCP Honor Guard emerges strong, on mission, and prepared to provide the best quality service at a moment's notice. Fulfilling a wide range of demands the Honor Guard, a staple of the law division, performs in events including Accreditation Static Display, renders Honor in Memoriam for retirees, and conducts Presentation of Colors for awards ceremonies. A total of nineteen (19) events were staffed during the



2021 calendar year.

This year as Virginia hosted the SEAFWA Conference we had the distinct pleasure of posting colors and assisting with presentation of awards for wildlife law enforcement officers from across the southeast. A common task was elevated as member agencies expected excellence and received the same as the HG preformed a flawless presentation and posting of colors.

Unfortunately, 2021 also marked one of the highest jumps in crimes against law enforcement officers across the nation and brought forth an unprecedented wave of line of duty deaths, even to Virginia. VCP Honor Guard members fulfilled their purpose and mission to “Stand for the Fallen” during 2021 attending more LODD (line of duty death) funerals than any other year since its inception. Even though VCP did not lose a member of its ranks to the violence, the loss of any officer is felt by all law enforcement across the Commonwealth. In these rare and unfortunate events, the Honor Guards purpose is to convey the respect and concern of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, and to provide added dignity to the family of the deceased. As beacon of professionalism VCP Honor Guard stands for the fallen.



6.0 Officer Outreach

In June, members of the Rapidan Foundation gathered in the Rapidan Volunteer Fire Department’s meeting room to hear a talk by Master Conservation Police Officer Jon Simmons. With 18 years of experience working for the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, Simmons knows the region’s woods, fields, rivers and streams quite well, and he was happy to answer questions of particular interest to Rapidan residents. Local residents have noticed an increase in river activity (and trash) near the bridge on Route 615. Simmons said he regularly goes down to the river and talks to the people he meets there. While he said public safety is his top concern, he’s always on the lookout for “the 1% group—the true group of criminals in society.” And it turns out that not everyone he encounters below the bridge, especially in the evening, is there to fish or just splash around. Simmons said



he’s run into class I and II drug users (think heroin, cocaine) and “wanted” people, among others with whom you probably wouldn’t want to share a canoe.



On a cool morning in March, DWR assisted Shenco Troutfitters, community volunteers and concerned



these hardworking citizen volunteers to clean up, Stony Creek and Mill Creek would be a mess of accumulated litter, mostly tossed by careless people who throw out trash along the two state roads that closely parallel these two stocked streams.

CPO's Heine, Ostlund, Diluigi, Goff, Simmons and Sgt Kekic all worked hard to help collect and load the trash collected, and to provide traffic control during the clean-up and subsequent trout stocking of both creeks. DWR Fisheries staff Butch Hall along with CWF volunteers Bruce Ritchie, Duane Shirkey, and Allen Easterly sacrificed their Saturday to stock a total of 1,300 pounds of trout, 1 net at a time, along the miles of trout stream that make up Stony Creek and Mill Creek stocked trout waters. It's incredible to see the number of citizens, anglers and non-anglers both, who show up year after year to help. This year, we had approximately 60 volunteers that ranged in age from 8 to 83 years old! Boy Scout troop #54 returned again to sell ham sandwiches, hot dogs, and drinks and keep the volunteer machine fueled up and running. The efforts of all involved netted a whopping 2,280 pounds of trash, or 1.14 tons. 13 tires were collected along with dumped furniture, various litter items, and dumped construction waste.

"Thank You" to all who helped, including Cabin Hill Homes, who provides the dump truck every year to haul all of the trash collected to the landfill, and to the truck's driver, Dale Dotson, who comes every year to help load and haul everything. A special "thanks" to Shenco Troutfitters for posting flyers, taking pictures and video of the event and organizing the volunteer effort. We hope to see everyone back out there next year for what will be the 7th Annual Trout Stream Clean up!



DWR CPOs make it one of their primary missions to connect with constituents and potential constituents to keep Virginia hunting, fishing, and boating. As ambassadors to all the outdoor activities that Virginia has to offer, we proudly make time and effort for anyone who shares our core ethic of safely enjoying our natural resources.

7.0 Recognition and Award

7.1 Officer of the Year

Natural resources law enforcement is a unique form of community policing that takes an unwavering commitment to a lifestyle of service. It is clear to everyone that works with First Class Conservation Police Officer William “Tim” Bostic that he inherently loves the work that he does and believes in the importance of Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources’ mission to connect, conserve, and protect, and that positive attitude projects into every public interaction he has. Tim’s extensive knowledge of the community in which he serves (for over 14 years) has enabled him to establish and maintain deep connections, cultivating valuable sources of information. Using this knowledge, Tim has become a mentor to other DWR Conservation Police Officers, sharing a wealth of information and experience to ensure that future officers can carry forth the tradition of excellence in natural resources policing in Virginia’s Piedmont region.



Tim fosters a positive working dynamic in his district, where every officer strives to improve their service to the public with every interaction. He has created a work culture among his peers that is not influenced by unhealthy competition, but rather to achieve the highest quality of public service and excellence in every case. In Tim’s own words, “Emersion into more in-depth cases often creates an excellent learning environment that builds competency and confidence in myself and others.”

Tim is the district leader in all aspects of law enforcement including violations detected and custodial arrests, OUIs, DUIs, and felony arrests. Tim’s commitment to excellence and teamwork has earned him Virginia’s Conservation Police Officer of the Year. His community-focused approach to addressing poaching concerns and boating safety problem areas has provided an example for his fellow officers to follow, and has demonstrated the finest qualities of our profession.

7.2 Boating Officer of the Year (NASBLA)

The Virginia Conservation Police Boating Officer of the Year for 2021 is awarded to Conservation Police Officer Shane Wilson. This prestigious award is given to the officer who, during the calendar year, demonstrates an outstanding contribution to boating safety through the enforcement of boating laws and



regulations in support of DWR's mission on Virginia's public waters. The Boating Officer of the Year is selected by a delegation of the officer's peers from across the Commonwealth. All CPOs receive advanced training in boat handling skills on a wide variety of platforms, as well as boat-specific law enforcement tactics and techniques, which is why DWR is the premiere boat law enforcement entity in Virginia.

CPO Wilson has excelled in the area of boating safety through law enforcement, Boating Under the Influence (BUI) cases, assisting other agencies, boat accident investigations, boater outreach and education, search and rescue patrols,

inspiring innovation in water sports, protection of Virginia's aquatic natural resources, and heroism while in the performance of his duties. He responded to 9 boating incidents and addressed 9 reckless operation violations and, realizing the increasing trend of incidents, volunteered to represent DWR by participating in several on-camera media interviews and media ride-alongs to bring attention to boating safety issues. He attended NASBLA's level 1 boat accident reconstruction course, which provided him with an understanding of the principles and techniques necessary to conduct a more thorough and complete boat accident investigations.

In addition, Officer Wilson is highly engaged with members of the Smith Mountain Lake community and attended several Water Safety Council (WSC) meetings. Also, during the summer, CPO Wilson assisted with security and water safety efforts during the Carilion Clinic IRONMAN 70.3, Virginia's Blue Ridge Triathlon. During the event, Shane was responsible for rescuing approximately 15 people from the water who were in distress as a result of fatigue. His positive attitude and enjoyment for boating law enforcement work is an inspiration to his fellow CPOs, which is why his peers proudly selected him to receive the DWR's Boating Officer of the Year award.

7.4 Other Awards

Colonel's Leadership Award (2021)

The purpose of the Colonel's Leadership Award is to formally recognize those officers and staff members that set the standard in regard to being a leader within the Law Enforcement Division. Furthermore, the Colonel has an opportunity each year to highlight an employee within the division who is demonstrating a best practices management model through their outstanding actions and deeds per the criteria identified below in our Professional Standards CREED. The recipient of the 2021 Colonel's Leadership Award is Lt. Rob Ham.



Lifesaving Medal (2021)

The Lifesaving Medal may be awarded to any sworn officer of the Law Enforcement Division who, through demonstrating extraordinary effort, provides direct life sustaining emergency medical care, or rescues or endeavors to rescue any person from life-threatening incidents such as drowning, vehicle accidents, fires, or other perils.



Jacob Chaffin



Brandon Harris



Kevin Webb



O.P.S. Professionalism Decree (Class of 2021)

The purpose of the O.P.S. Professionalism Decree (Innovation Award) is to establish a tradition to formally recognize those Sworn Officers and DWR Law Enforcement Staff who have gone above and beyond to promote the professionalism of Virginia Conservation Police through their commitment and dedication to this public service profession.



Sgt. Carl Martin



Gary Sargent



Kevin Leonard



Sgt. Frank Spuchesi

7.5 Promotions

Major Milt Robinson- Professional Standards Manager

Lt. Randy Hickman - Region 1 Manager

Sgt. Tyler Bumgarner- District 16 Supervisor

Sgt. Chance Dobbs - District 42 Supervisor

Sgt. Rich Landers - District 46 Supervisor

Sgt. Joel Wiedel - District 24 Supervisor

8.0 Retirees (2021)



Lee Wensel
39 years



Jim Anders
39 years



Sgt. B.I. Bell
31 years



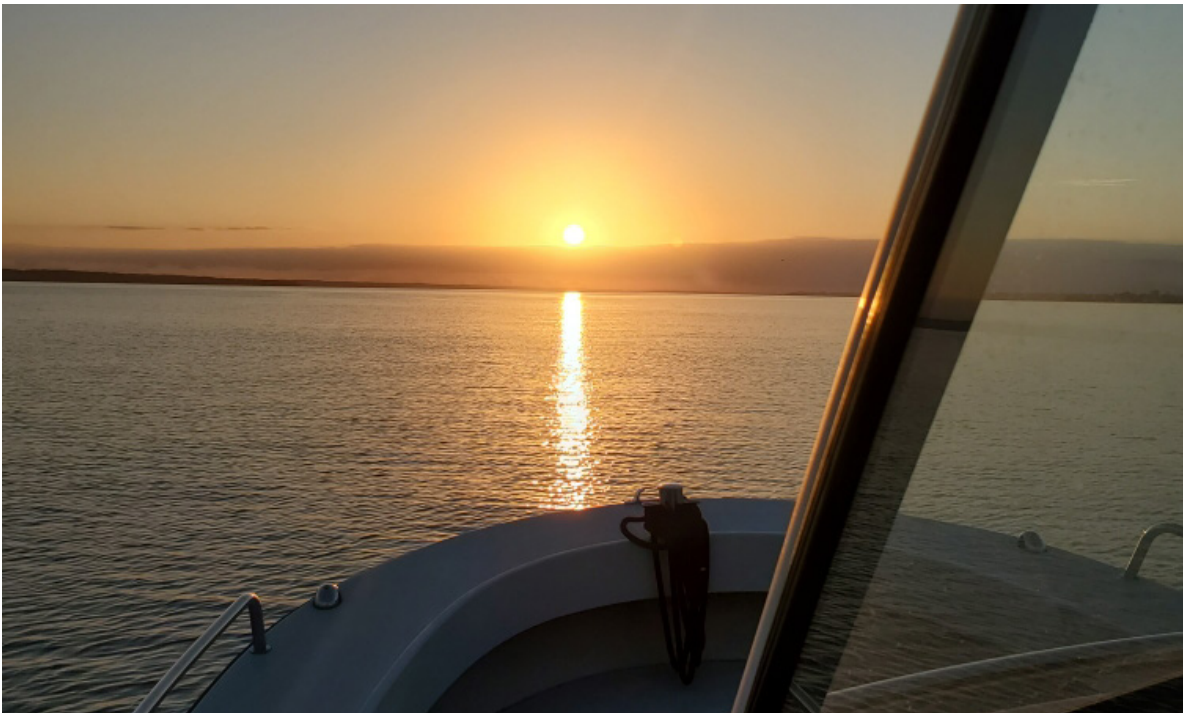
Major Scott Naff
27 years



Major Bryan Young
23 years

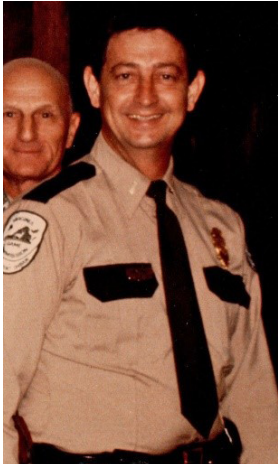


Troy Phillips
23 years



In Memoriam - Recently Fallen RETIREES

Captain Don Hinchey 07/23/2021



Retired Game Warden Captain Don Hinchey passed away on July 23, 2021. Captain Hinchey served the department for over 38 years in Region 3 (Southwest), beginning his tour of duty on October 4, 1968 until retiring on December 31, 2006. He was 79 years old at the time of his passing. He was born in Abingdon, Virginia on July 17, 1942. He was a United States Air Force veteran prior to becoming a game warden. A graveside service was held on July 28, 2021, at Knollkreg Memorial Park with the Rev. Jerry A. Eggers officiating. Military honors were provided by the United States Air Force and the Highlands Veterans Honor Guard. Don is survived by his wife of 47 years, Terri Hinchey; daughter, Kimberly Galloway; grandson, Rodney Noland and long-term girlfriend, Jessica Jacobsen; grandson, Nicholas Noland and wife, Lauren Noland; and his brother, Charles

Hinchey. We are eternally grateful to Don and his family for his service to our country and to DWR.

Game Warden John Edward Selfe 3/2/2021

Retired Game Warden John Edward Selfe, Jr. passed away on May 17, 2021. He was born June 29, 1951 in Abingdon, Virginia. Ed was very highly regarded by everyone who worked with him at DWR. Survivors include his wife, Lori Selfe; sons, Andy and his wife Ruthie Selfe of Marion, VA; John Selfe, III and fiancée Robyn Bozik of Louisa, VA; grandchildren, Jayden Selfe, Logan Selfe, Landon Selfe and Taylor Selfe; a sister, Rebecca and her husband Dale Collins of Wythe County; brothers, Kenneth and Karen Selfe of Bedford, Don Selfe of Christiansburg, Allen and Chrissy Selfe of Catawba, NC and Greg Selfe of Wytheville. He was 69 years old at the time of his passing. Ed began his tour of duty on May 7, 1979 and retired on April 1, 2002. From everyone at DWR, we are sincerely grateful for Ed's 23 years of service with the department.



Virginia Hosts 75th Annual SEAFWA Conference

In October 2021, the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) hosted the 75th Annual Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) Conference in Roanoke, Virginia. Fisheries, Wildlife and Law Enforcement professionals from fifteen states converged at the Hotel Roanoke Conference Center for an action packed four-day event making it the first in-person SEAFWA meeting post-pandemic. Captain Tony Fisher coordinated all Law Enforcement



Division efforts, which required months of careful planning among DWR personnel and external stakeholders. Regarding the conference, DWR Director Ryan Brown, who was in attendance, remarked “this is a proud moment for our agency.” One of the many highlights of the event was an open forum where Accreditation in Natural Resources Law Enforcement was discussed and the decision was made to further explore the establishment of an accreditation standard for natural resources agencies across the south-

east United States. As the conference neared conclusion, law enforcement personnel had the opportunity to immerse themselves in history as they toured the National D-Day Memorial followed by a scenic excursion across the Blue Ridge Parkway to the Peaks of Otter Lodge. Next year’s conference will be hosted by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, who have already requested DWR’s assistance with the planning process.



The Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) is an organization whose members are the agencies with primary responsibility for management and protection of the fish and wildlife resources in 15 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Member states are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

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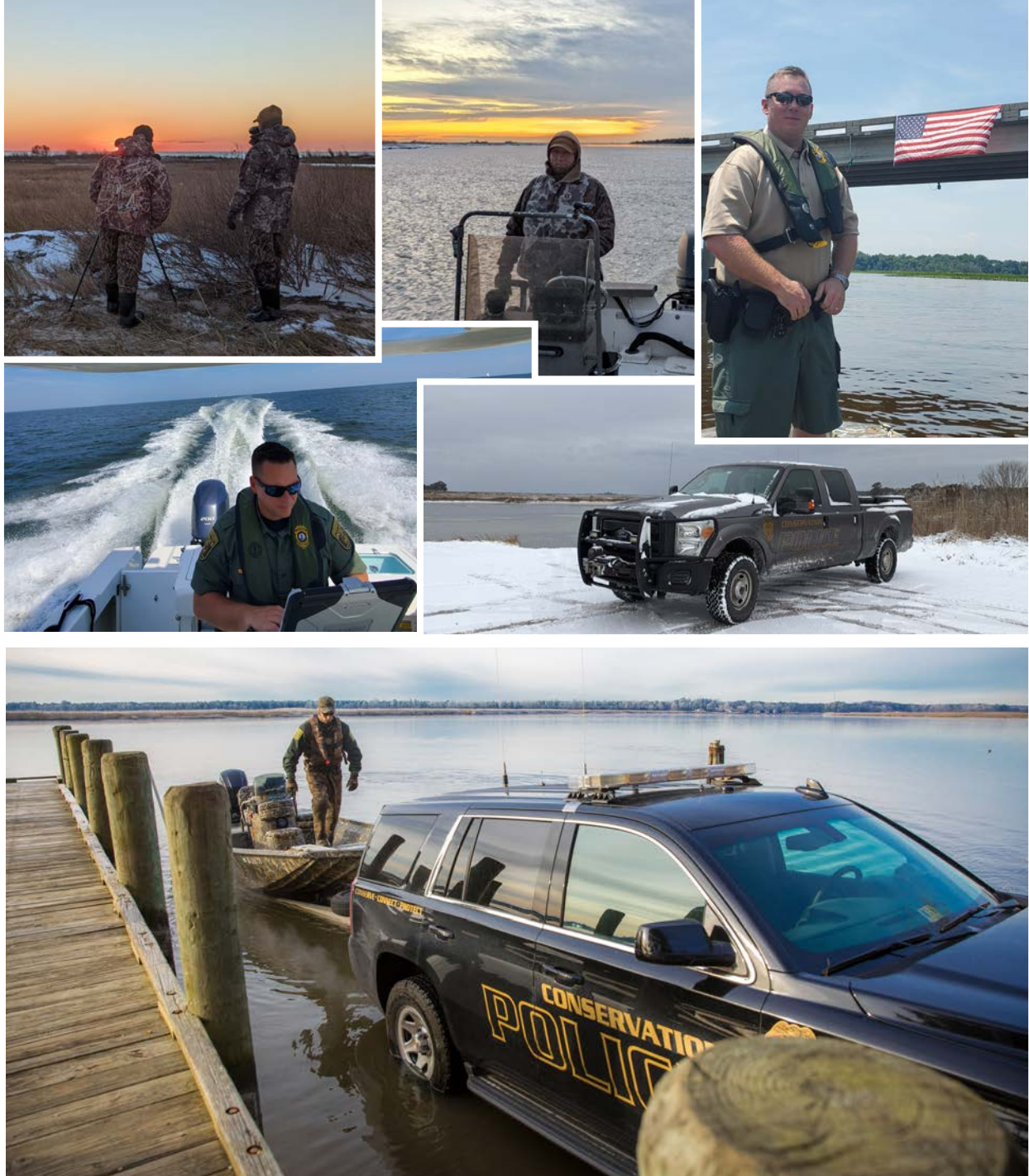
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All photos in this report were contributed by DWR staff
unless otherwise noted

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