



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
DIVISION OF STATE ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONSERVATION POLICE  
79 Elm St., Hartford, CT 06106-5127  
Tel. (860) 424-3012 Fax (860) 424-3672



**2024 Annual Statistics Report**

The following report is designed to provide an overall review of the work completed by the staff of the Environmental Conservation Police Division during 2024. The purpose of this analysis is to provide a review of the productivity of the Environmental Conservation Police Division, provide statistical information to base planning decisions for future operations, and highlight the work the Division performed throughout the year. This annual report is completed to provide transparency to the public and is done in accordance with the Policies and Procedures of the Environmental Conservation Police Division for the State of Connecticut.

The first part of the review is to analyze enforcement activities between July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024 (Table 1). This semi-annual analysis provides comparable data from historical records. This information was compared to data extrapolated from the same time frame in 2022 and 2023. This data was obtained from the Computer Aided Dispatch and Records Management System (CAD/RMS) of the Division.

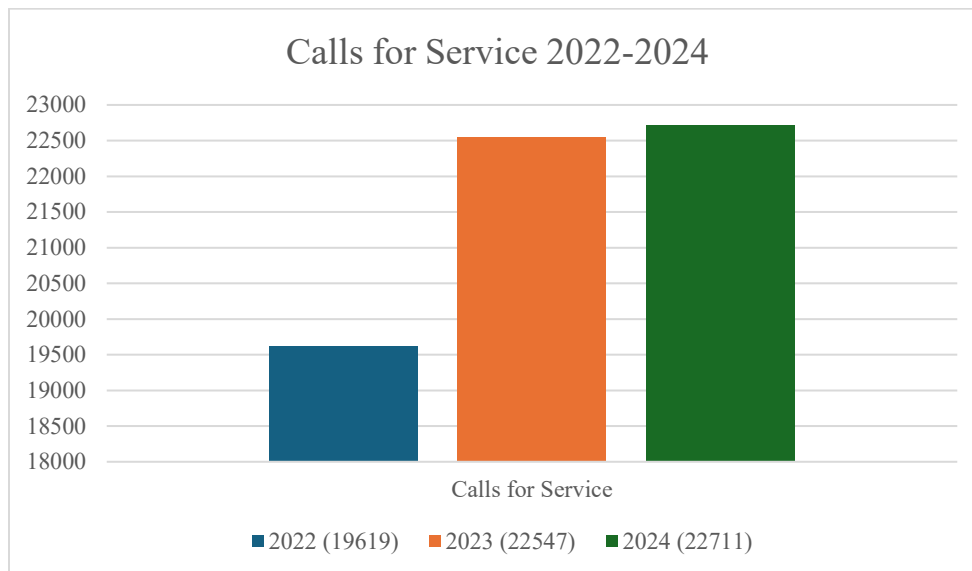
Category	July 1, 2022, through Dec 31, 2022	July 1, 2023, through Dec 31, 2023	July 1, 2024, through Dec 31, 2024
Calls for Service	12284	12236	13936
Arrests	64	88	84
Infractions issued	729	723	998
Written warnings	274	276	247
Verbal warnings	364	364	745

Table 1

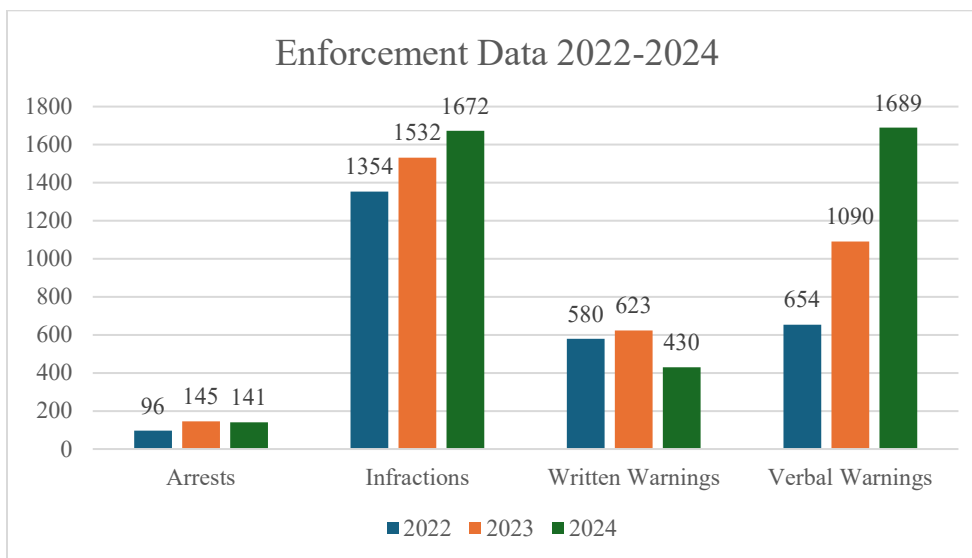
The next data sets evaluate the information that was collected beginning on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024 (Table 2). Comparable enforcement information was then synthesized and measured to reflect enforcement actions taken between the same date ranges of 2022, and 2023 by members of this Division (Table 3 and Table 4). All this information was collected through the CAD/RMS of the Division.



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**Table 2**



**Table 3**

Category	2022	2023	2024
Arrests	96	145	141
Infractions	1354	1532	1672
Written Warnings	580	623	430
Verbal Warnings	654	1090	1689

**Table 4**



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**Enforcement Statistics**

To understand and interpret enforcement outcomes, the agency has created several new metrics to evaluate enforcements laws with the public. The first metric is intended to demonstrate demographics contained within the arrest data that is obtained during the processing of every arrestee. This information was obtained from the CAD/RMS and is intended to evaluate the demographics of individuals who were taken into custody by Officers of the Division. The total number of in-custody arrests (not including motor vehicle summons') was 127 for 2024. Arrest data specific to gender identity was recorded using the arrest information for 2024 in the table below (Table 5).

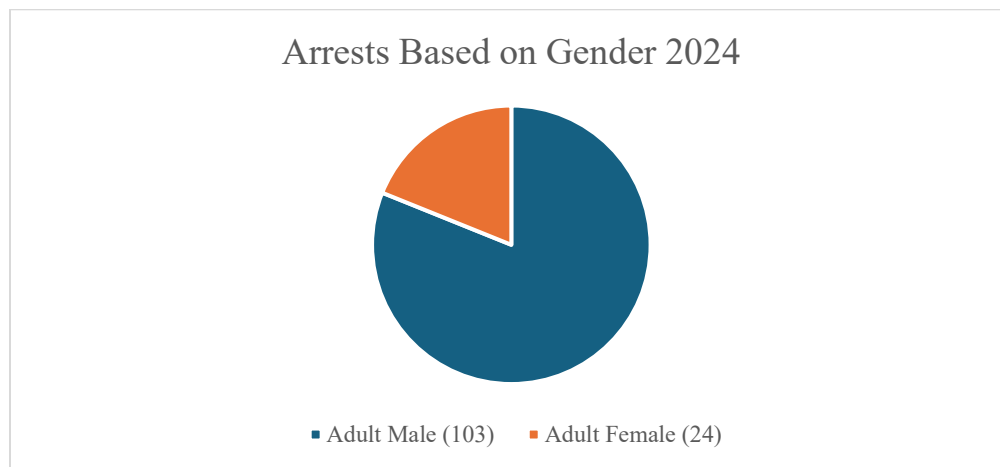


Table 5

The next table (Table 6) provides a demographic breakdown of ethnicity of arrestees.

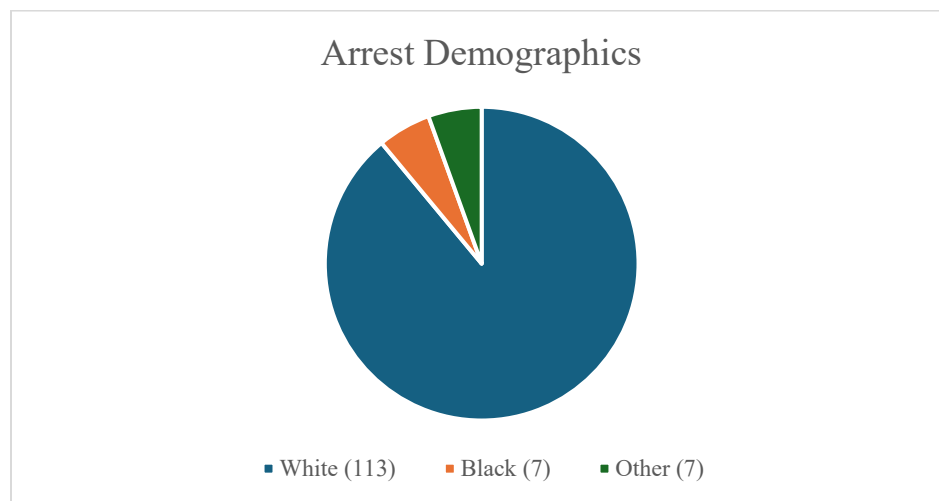


Table 6



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Consistent with this statistical analysis of information, the Division will then focus on providing data pertaining to the areas of enforcement, that as an Environmental Conservation Officer, are authorized to enforce. This information is intended to analyze trends, report data, and evaluate how enforcement is conducted throughout the State of Connecticut. The Division is responsible for reporting enforcement pertaining to traffic laws, state parks, boating, wildlife activities, and fishing related activities. This annual report will analyze statistics and provide transparency on how it supports and assists the citizens of Connecticut, and our efforts to protect natural resources within the State.

### Traffic Statistics

In accordance with the Alvin Penn Racial Profiling Law, the Division records and maintains specific information that is associated with Motor Vehicle enforcement. The next table (Table 7) provides a visual illustration of the data associated with Motor Vehicle enforcement for 2024. The information was collected through the CAD/RMS maintained by the Division and is submitted to The Connecticut Racial Profiling Prohibition Project on an annual basis. The enforcement analysis of the Division is as follows:

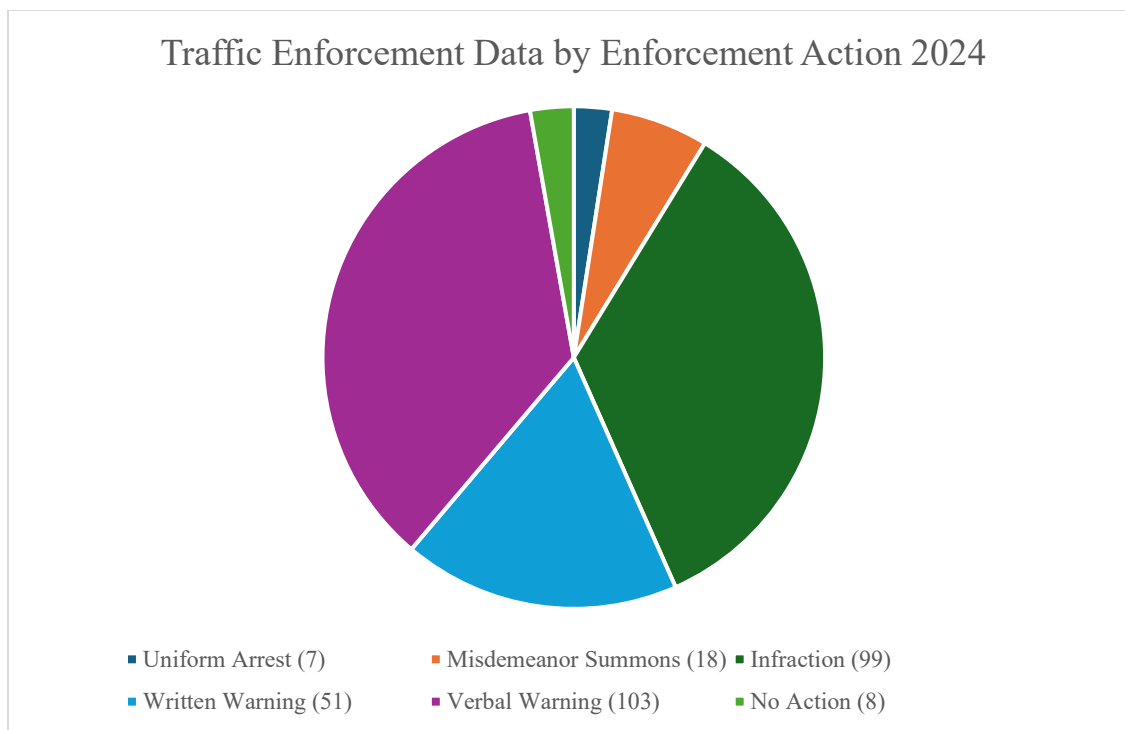


Table 7

The data located in the next Table (Table 8 and Table 9) represents the demographic breakdown of motor vehicle enforcement data for 2024. The data obtained for this report was taken from the CAD/RMS of the Division. The results of this analysis are as follows:



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Demographic Traffic Enforcement Data 2024

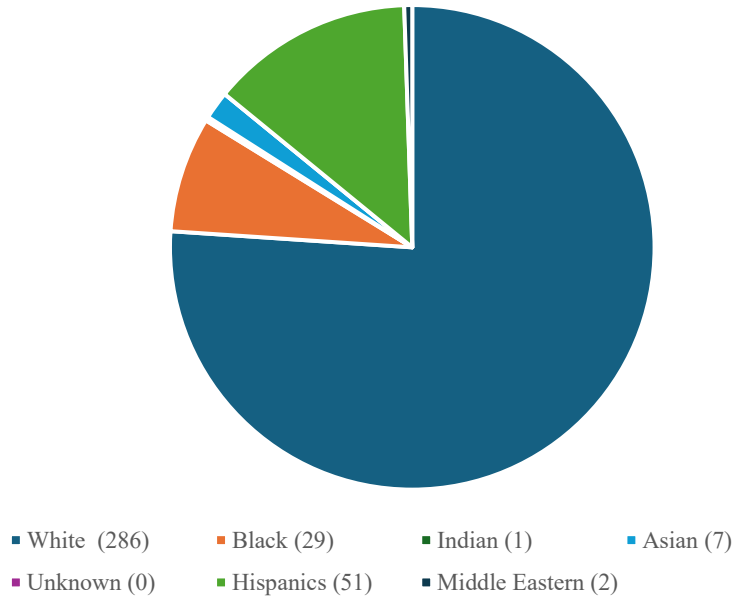


Table 8

Gender Traffic Enforcement Data 2024

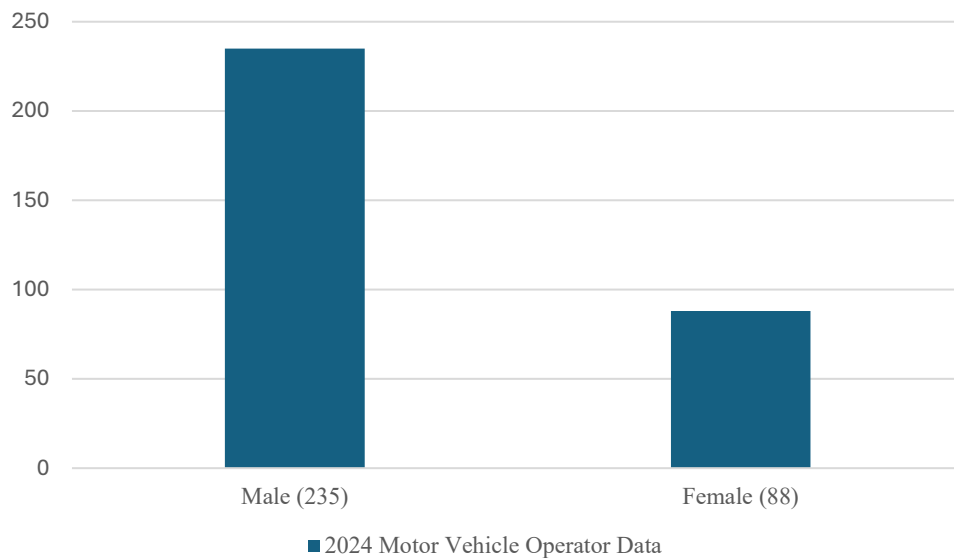


Table 9



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## State Parks Statistics



Connecticut has 110 state parks and 32 state forests, encompassing over 250,000 acres of ambling river valleys, rolling hills, mountains, rivers, lakes, shoreline, and forest. In 2022, an estimated 15.5 million people explored these parks, forests, and waterways. Whether camping at one of the 14 state campgrounds, swimming in our lakes and streams, hiking along our thousands of miles of trails, Connecticut's vast system of state parks and forests has something to offer every outdoor enthusiast.

From the coastal parks along the Long Island Sound to the Taconic Mountains in the Northwest and everything in between, Connecticut's natural diversity, scenic beauty, and outdoor recreation opportunities contribute immeasurably to the quality of life of its residents.

The Division of the Environmental Conservation Police having the authority to enforce laws and regulations within all State Parks and Forests for the State of Connecticut is the primary law enforcement agency tasked with enforcement efforts on these properties. To accomplish this task the Division collaborates and engages with the goal of creating a safe space for visitors to these areas so that all visitors can enjoy the natural resources that the State of Connecticut has to



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offer. The following tables provide an analysis of some of the calls for service our officers investigate in our State Parks and forests. Many of the visitors to the parks are law-abiding recreationalists seeking an opportunity to get away from their busy schedules. While this list is not all encompassing of every call for service the Division responds to, it provides a glimpse of the services our officers provide to these visitors. The data for this list was supported by the information collected for the CAD/RMS managed by the Division (Table 10).

## 2024 PARK CALLS FOR SERVICE

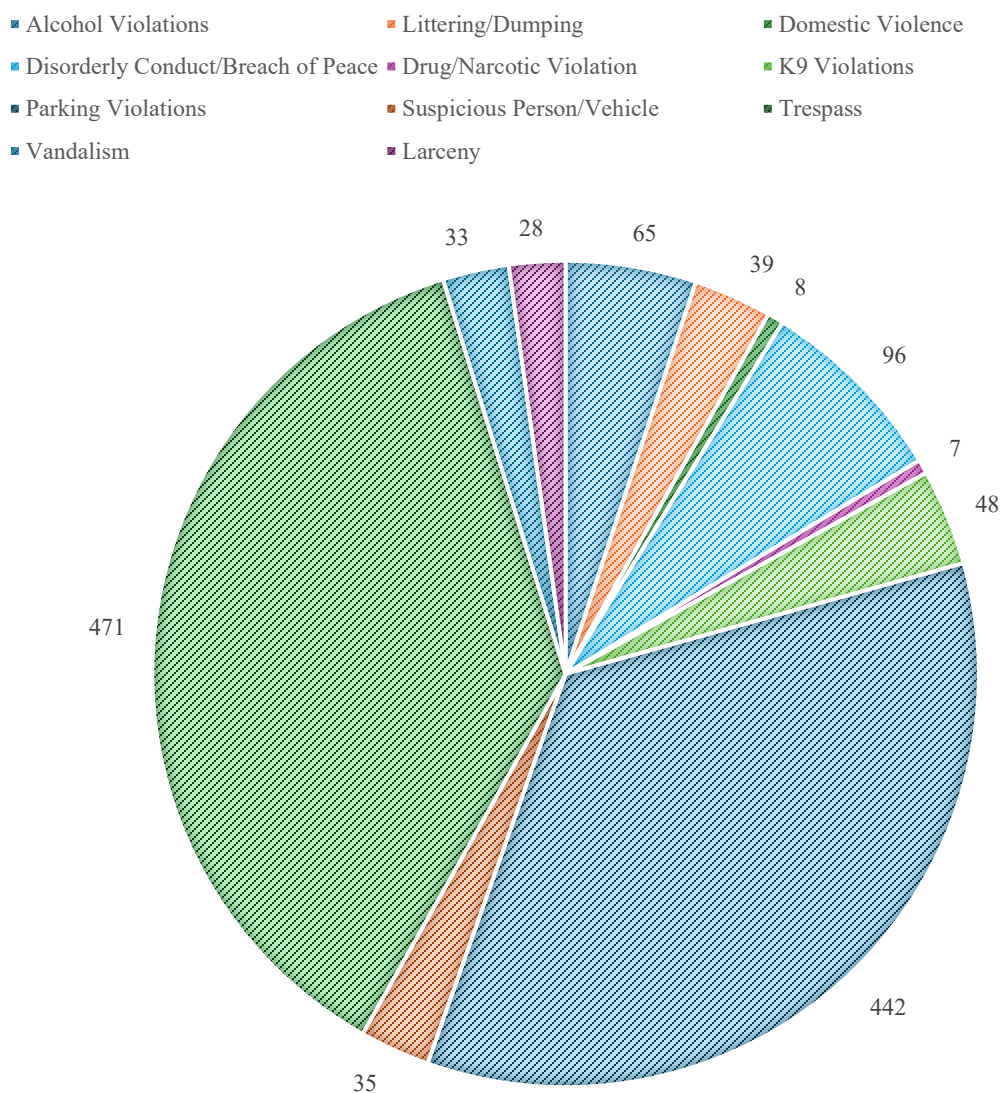


Table 10



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The next table (Table 11) provides an enforcement analysis of these calls for service and highlights what type of enforcement actions were taken during the investigation into these calls for service. Again, the information obtained for this table was recorded by the CAD/RMS that is managed by the Division.

Park Enforcement Statistics 2024

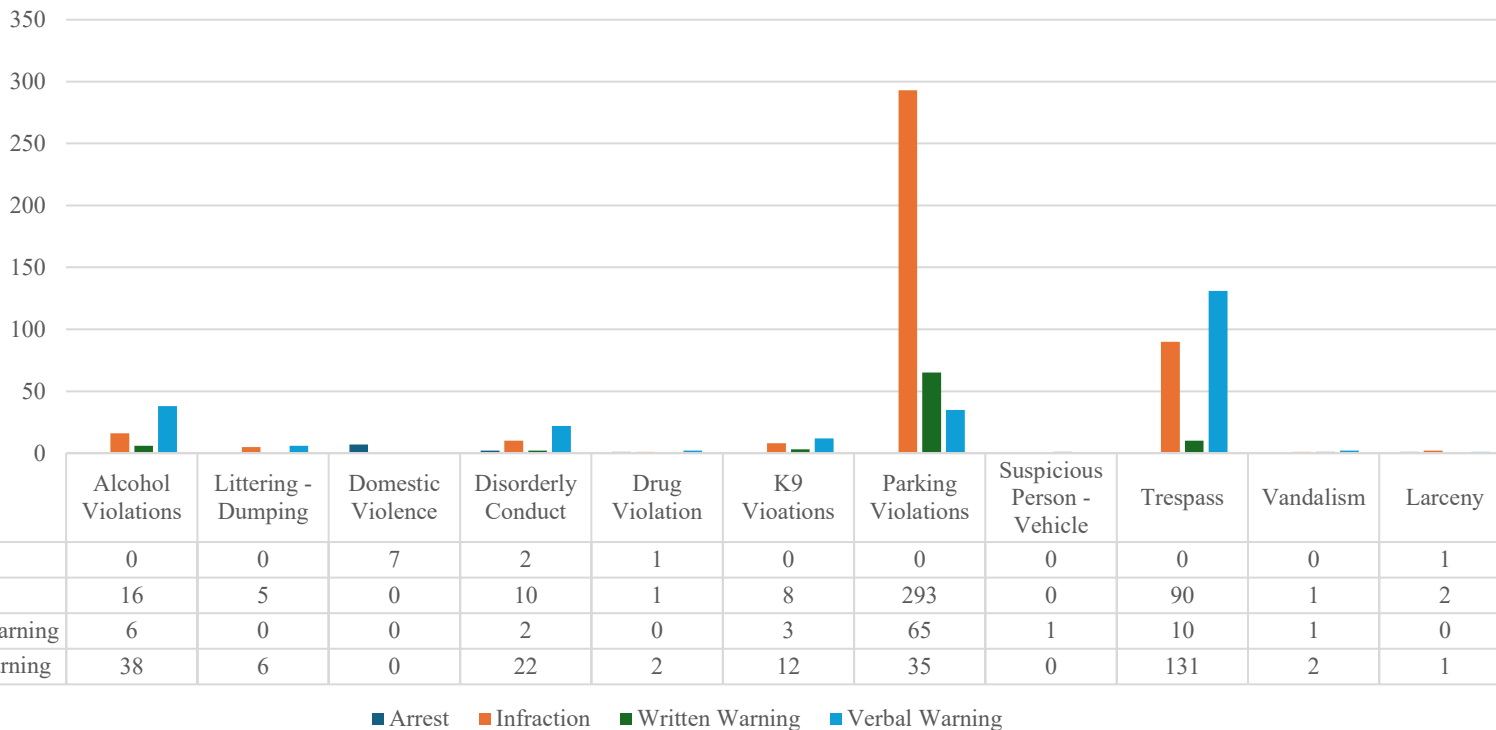


Table 11

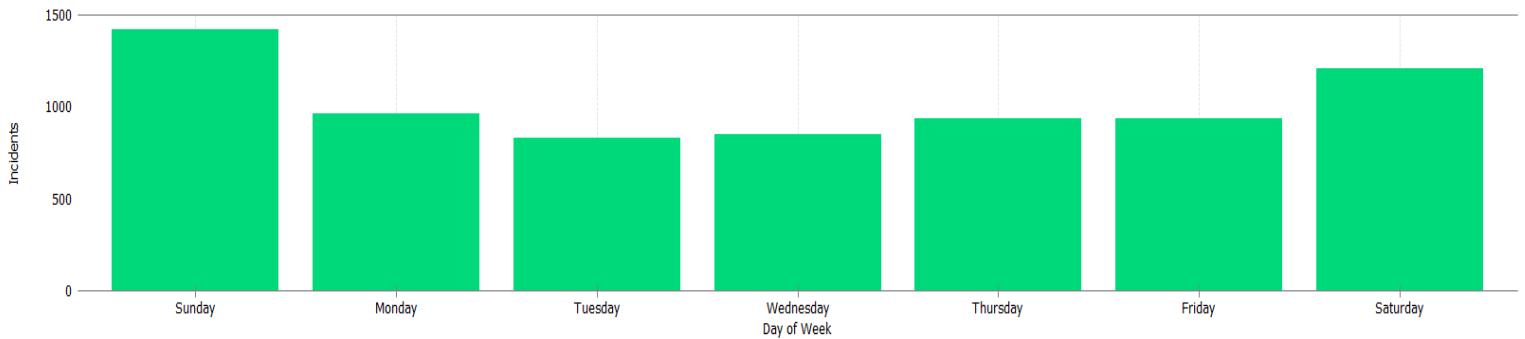
Table 12 provides an analysis of when calls for service for State Parks and forests occur. This information was obtained from the CAD/RMS managed by the Division and assists the Division with the allocation of staff to manage these increases in service. The first table provides an analysis by days of the week when calls for services have been recorded by the Communications Center.



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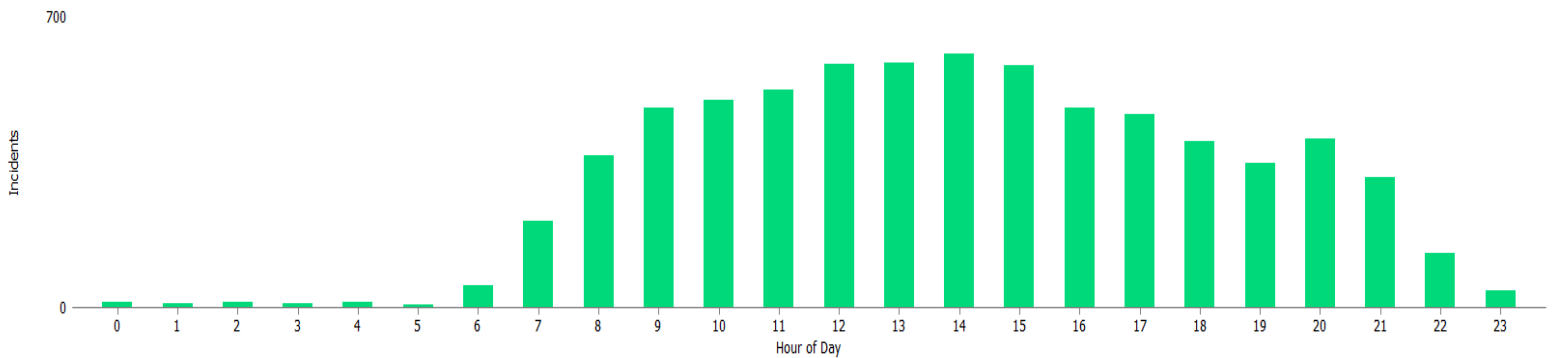
*By Day of Week*



**Table 12**

Table 13 provides an analysis of the time of day that these calls for services are recorded by the Communications Center. This list is recorded by a 24-hour clock and was obtained from the CAD/RMS managed by the Division.

*By Hour of Day*



**Table 13**



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## **Boating Statistics**

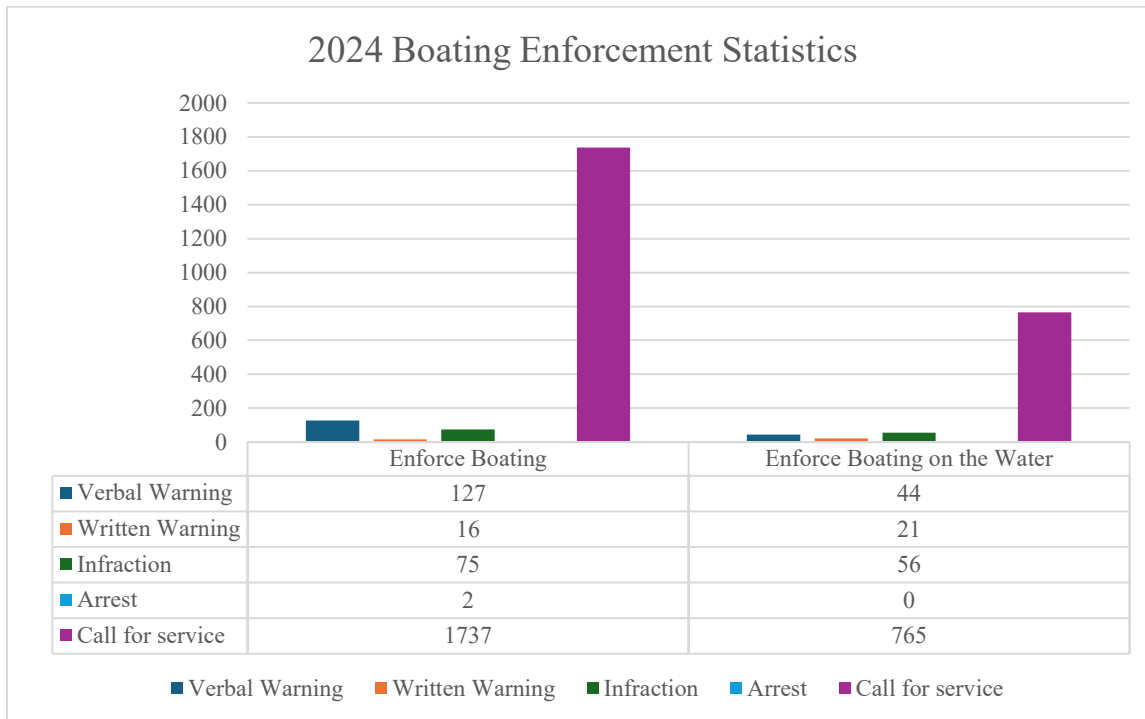


Members of the Division are responsible for patrolling all waters within the State of Connecticut and the Long Island Sound for recreational boating safety enforcement. Officers are tasked with enforcing state boating laws and regulations to ensure safe and enjoyable experiences on these waterways each year. To accomplish this mission, the Division requires all field staff to undertake upon a rigorous training program to be able to safely launch, operate, and retrieve a vessel. More information regarding this training is included in this report.

To track this activity, the Division records two types of boating patrols. The Division records “Enforce Boating” and “Enforce Boating on the Water” in its CAD/RMS to track these activities. The difference between these call types pertains to enforcement of boating activities from land (Enforce Boating), which includes the inspection of boat launches and recreational boating activities from shore, and on the water (Enforce Boating on the Water), which includes any enforcement being conducted from a vessel on a body of water. Enforcement actions regarding these activities were retrieved from the CAD/RMS of the Division and are reported below in Tables 14.

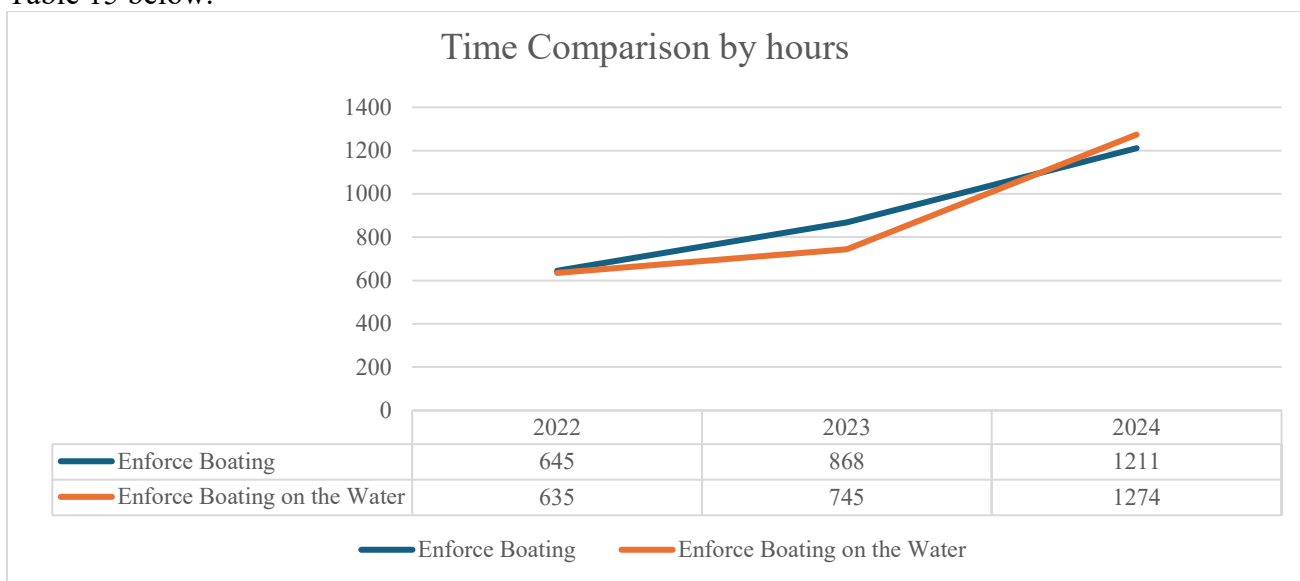


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**Table 14**

The next table reflects the amount of time that Officers spent conducting boating enforcement activities in 2024. The information for this report was obtained from the CAD/RMS maintained by the Division. This information was compared from data collected from the annual year (January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>) for 2022, 2023, and 2024. This information is recorded in Table 15 below.



**Table 15**



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**Wildlife Enforcement Statistics**



The Division is the sole law enforcement agency in the State of Connecticut committed to protecting its wildlife. The role of this task is to engage the men and women who are active participants in the outdoors which includes hunting and trapping, while also approaching the needs for conservation and protecting our lands and State Parks. 2024 was a great year for our Officers as they spent many days in the field interacting with the Connecticut Hunting Community. The Division is responsible for tracking the different hunting activities that the hunting community engages in. Using the CAD/RMS for the Division, the information was applied to Table 16 to break down these activities

**2024 Hunting Statistics**

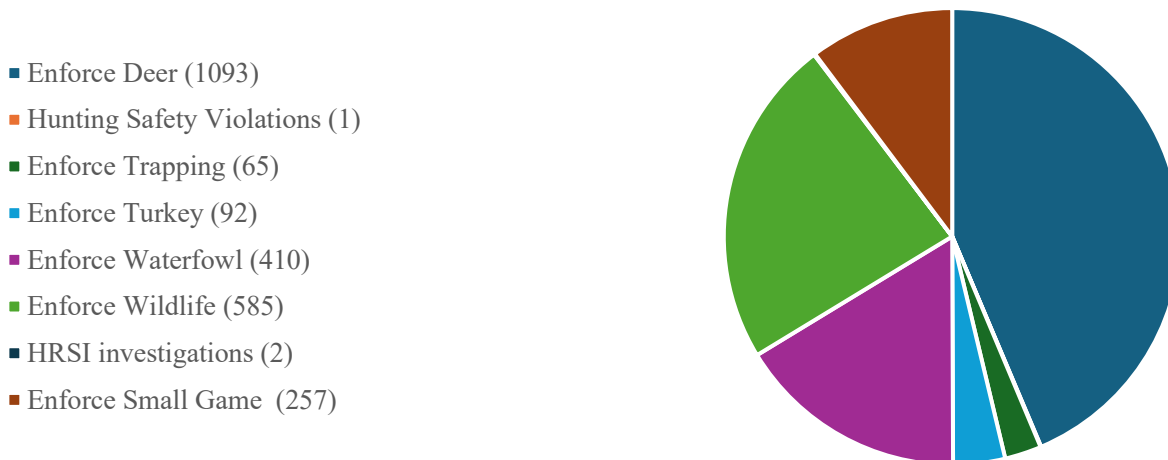


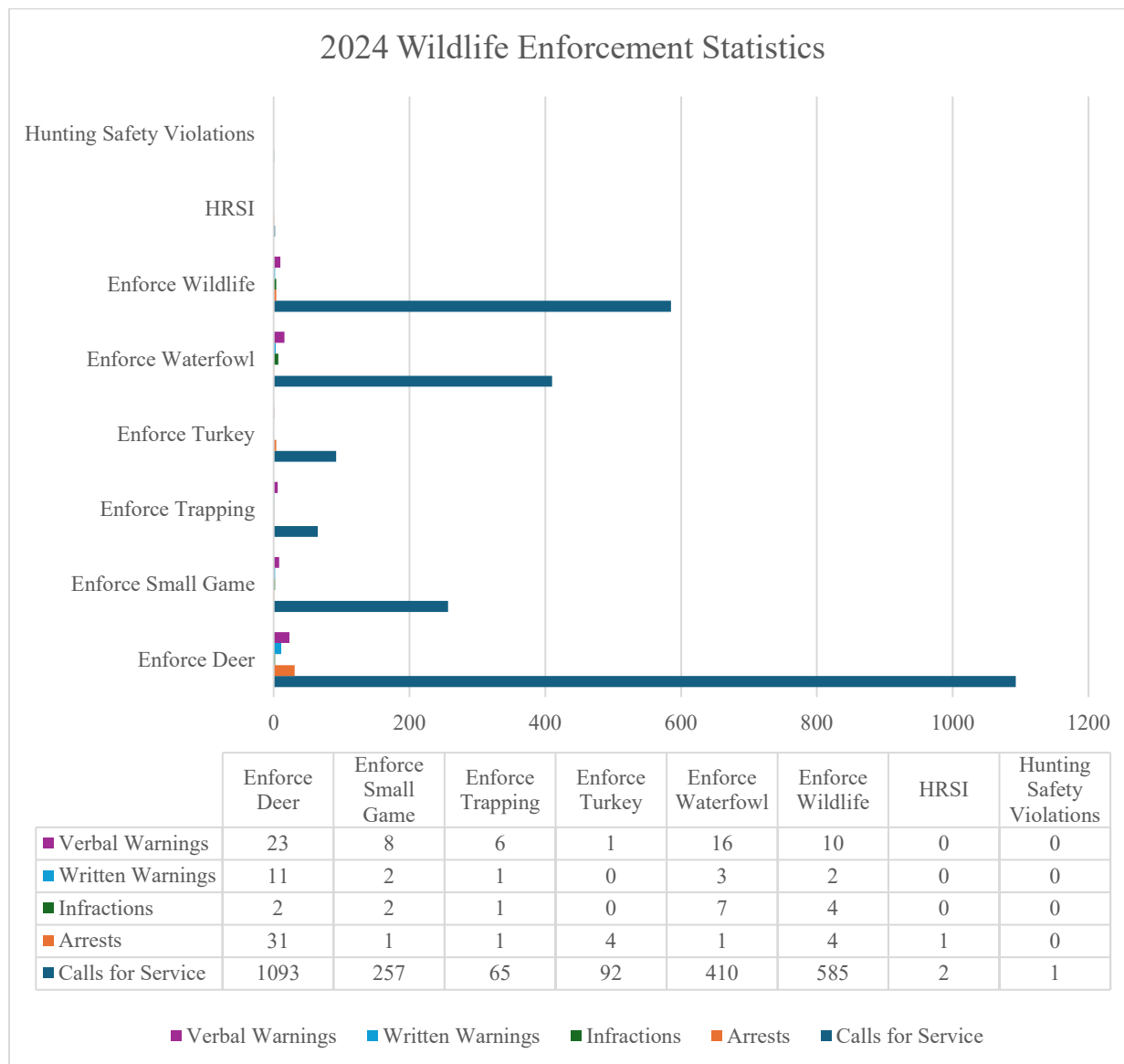
Table 16



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In Table 17, a breakdown of enforcement actions for these activities was tabulated. The information in this report was collected from the CAD/RMS managed by the Division. It is important to note that just because a case is categorized in this manner it does not necessarily mean that enforcement action was taken. This system includes how often Officers are walking through blocks of woods looking for illegal activity, responding to property owners calls for service, and making consensual encounters with the hunting community in the field. These are just a few of the reasons why these calls for service are categorized in this manner.



**Table 17**



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Next, Table 18 reflects the amount of time Officers spent conducting these specific activities. This table provides a breakdown of the time spent in the field compared to previous years. The number associated with this information is the number of hours spent engaged in that specific task.

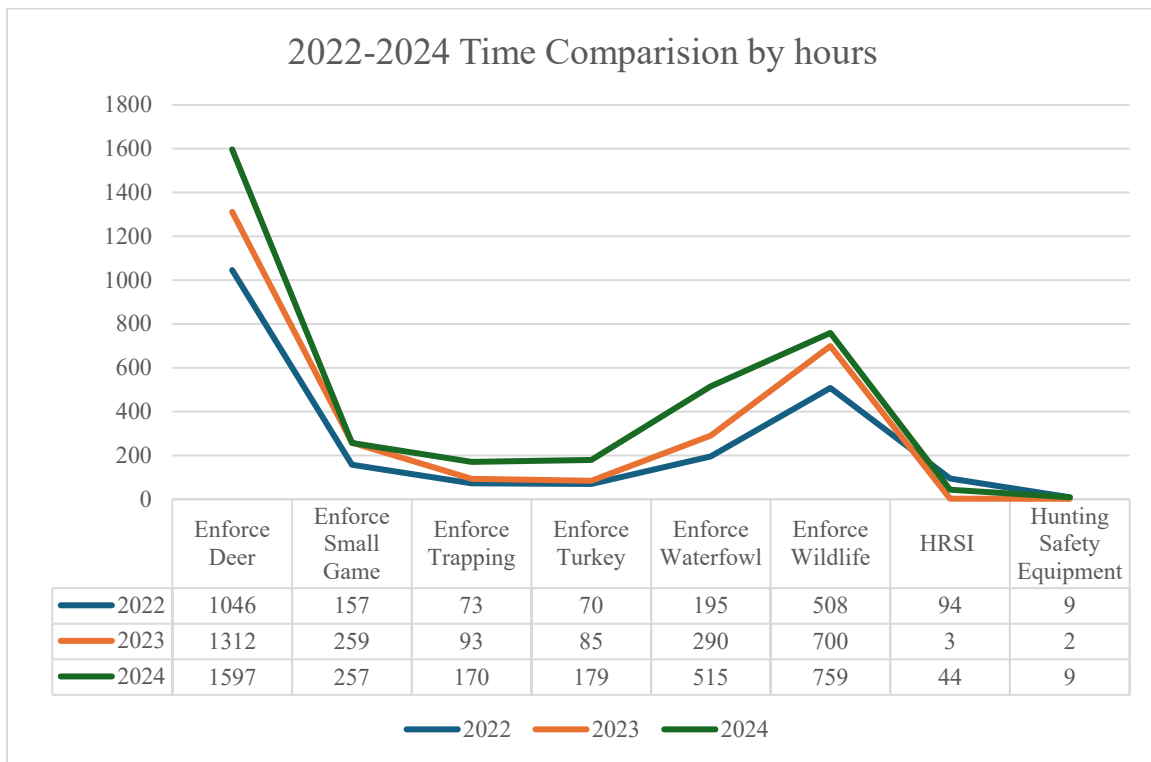


Table 18

## Fishing Enforcement Statistics





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The Division also has the unique responsibility of enforcing fishing regulations throughout the State and in Long Island Sound. This responsibility encompasses everything from the recreational angler to the commercial fishing industry. The complex nature of this type of enforcement requires Officers to have a vast knowledge of fish species as well as the regulations in place to protect those species. The following information was collected from the CAD/RMS of the Division and represents a breakdown of the calls for service that the Division engaged in for 2024. That information was collected and tabulated into Table 19 below.

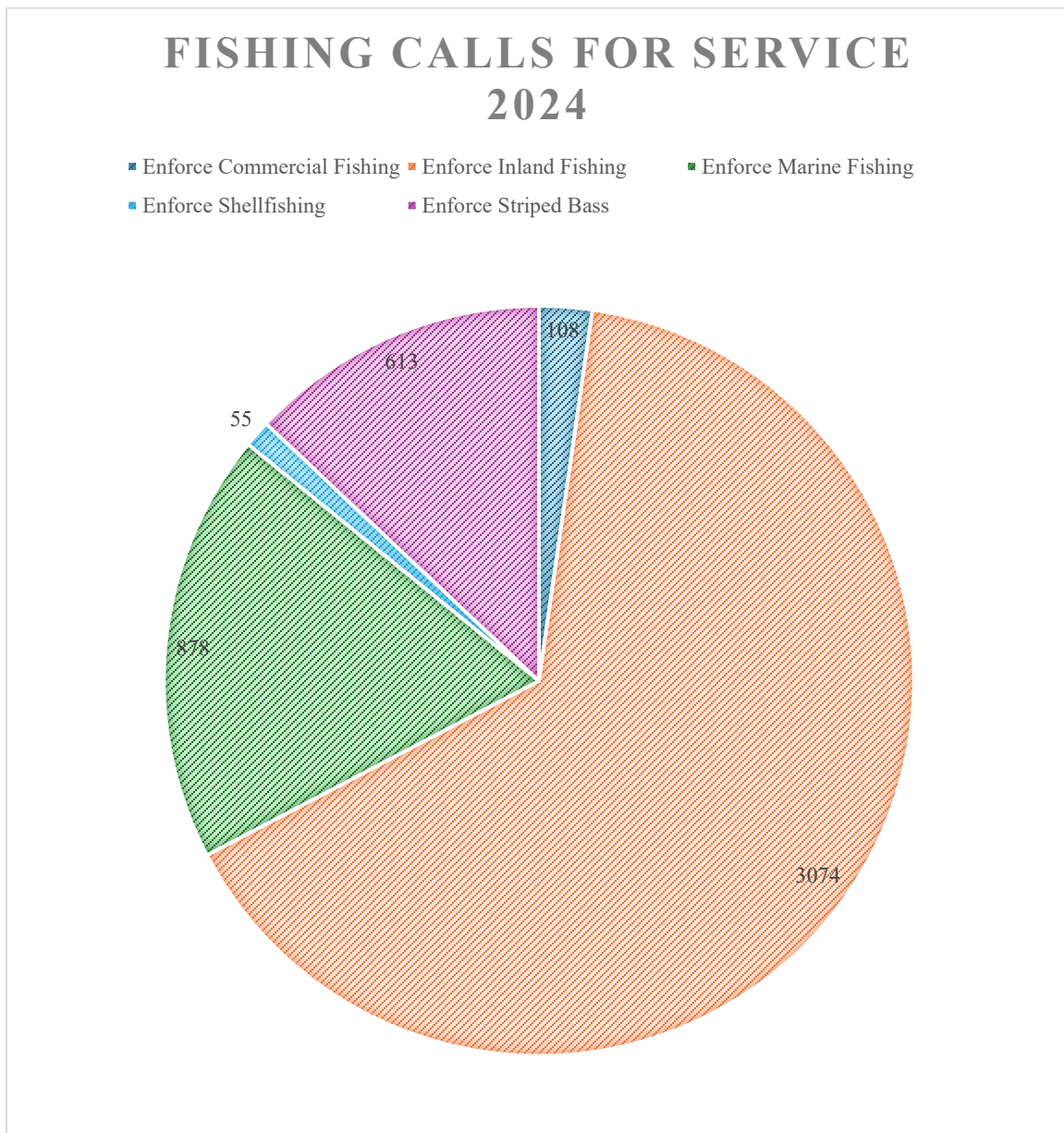


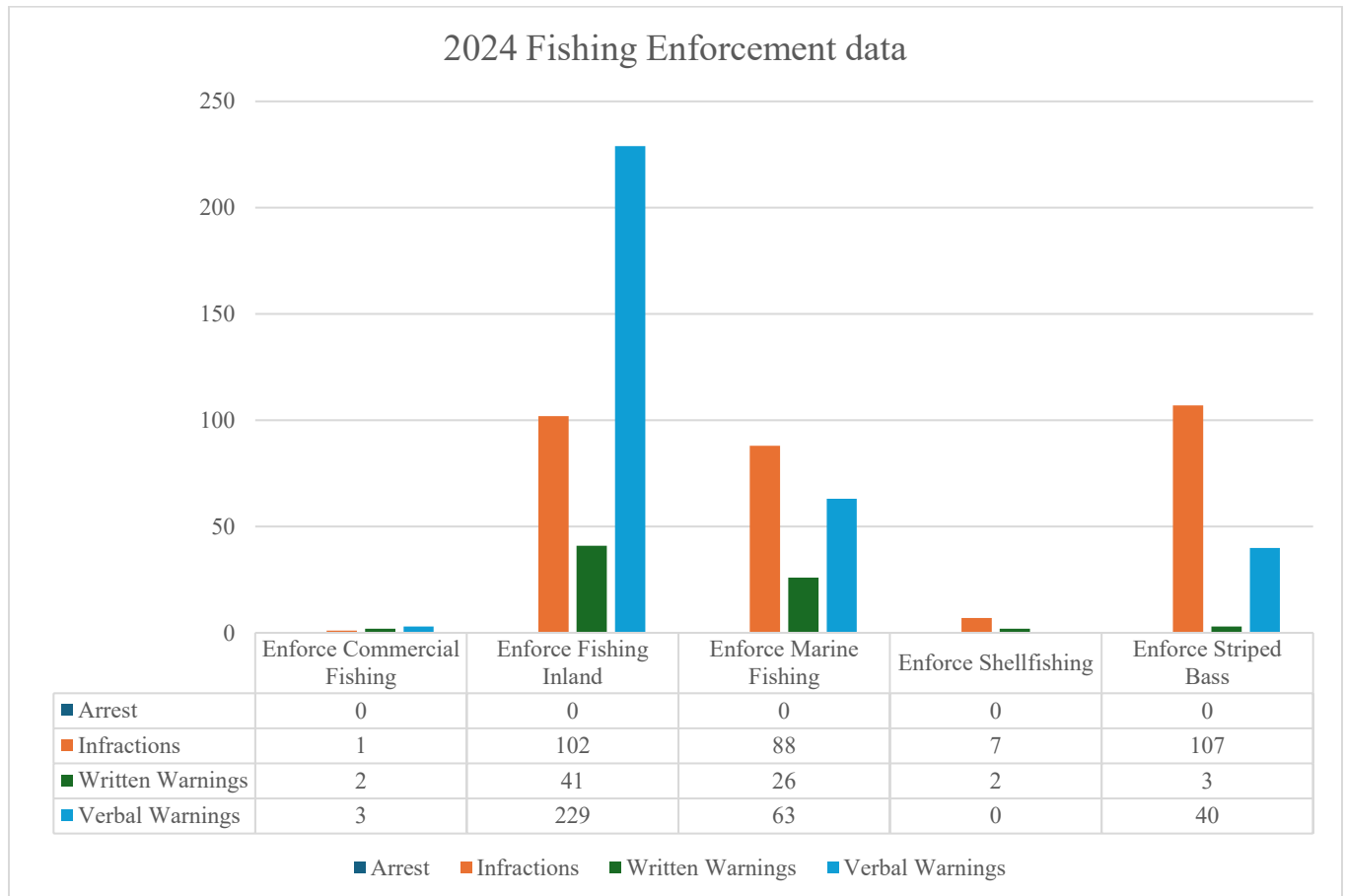
Table 19



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Table 20 represents a breakdown of enforcement action pertaining to these specific Fishing activities.



**Table 20**

The final analysis is a time comparison table that demonstrates the number of hours spent enforcing these specific fishing activities by the Officers within the Division. The hours spent enforcing fishing activities were compared against 2022 and 2023 for comparison purposes. This information was obtained from the CAD/RMS of the Division and is demonstrated in Table 21.



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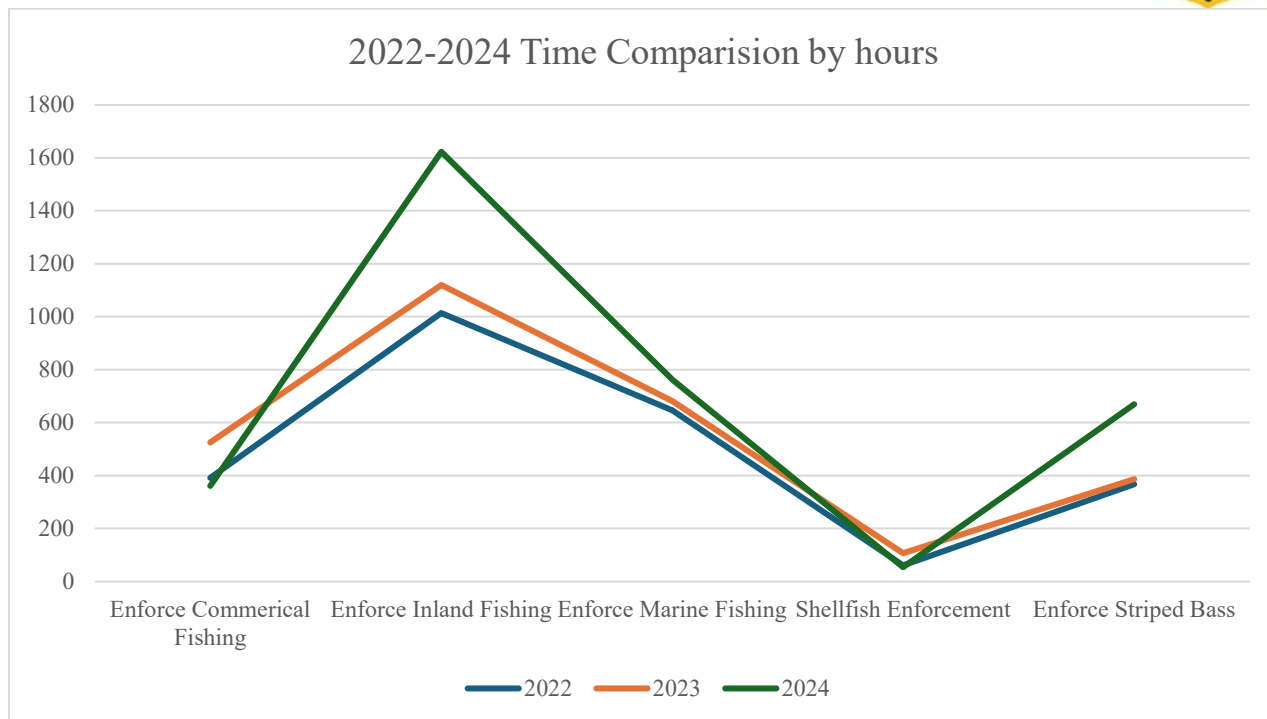


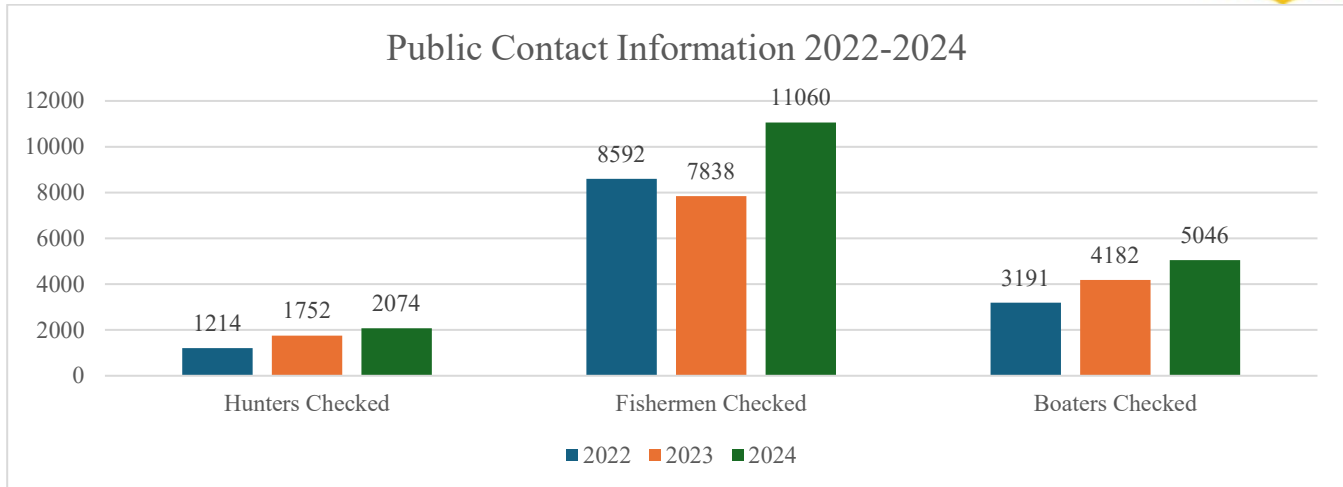
Table 21

**Public Contact Information**

As the law enforcement Division of DEEP, the agency has made concerted efforts to track consensual contacts with the public. The recorded data supports that most contacts do not result in enforcement action of any type. It is important to highlight the fact that just because an Officer makes a public contact it does not mean that a case number is pulled for the contact. Once the Officer determines that an individual may be involved in a violation of a law or regulation, that Officer then initiates a case number to record the public contact and what action, if any, was taken. The following table (Table 21) reflects a sampling of the constituents that Officers of the Environmental Conservation Police Division had contact with, who were engaged in outdoor recreational activities. The recording of this information is important for the Division to understand compliance rates among individuals who are engaged in recreational activities. Understanding how the Division enforces laws and regulations, and interpreting compliance data assists the Division in the implementation of tactical and strategic plans for future needs. The information in this report was extrapolated from the Division's Connecteam app that records this information from field Officers and compressed with the same data obtained from 2022, and 2023.



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**Table 21**

**Trends in Calls for Service**

Next, this report will evaluate some of the more frequent calls for service (CFS) that Officers respond to throughout the course of the year. While this table does not represent the complete call for service list, this table does reflect those calls for service which take a significant amount of time and effort by the Officers and supervisors of the Division to investigate. The data that comprises this list was taken from the CAD/RMS and represents a comparison between 2022, 2023, and 2024. This information is compiled into the table below (Table 22).

Category	2022	2023	2024
Parks (General)	2810	4096	4458
Public Outreach	222	234	271
ATV incidents	325	345	468
Disorderly Conduct	191	183	134
Trespass	585	593	561
Nuisance Bear	226	197	287
Paddle craft	64	108	158
Accident Investigations	106	87	100
Hunting related CFS	1674	1361	2520
Fishing related CFS	3000	2214	4926
DUI/BUI	12	11	11

**Table 22**

**Calls for Service Statistics**

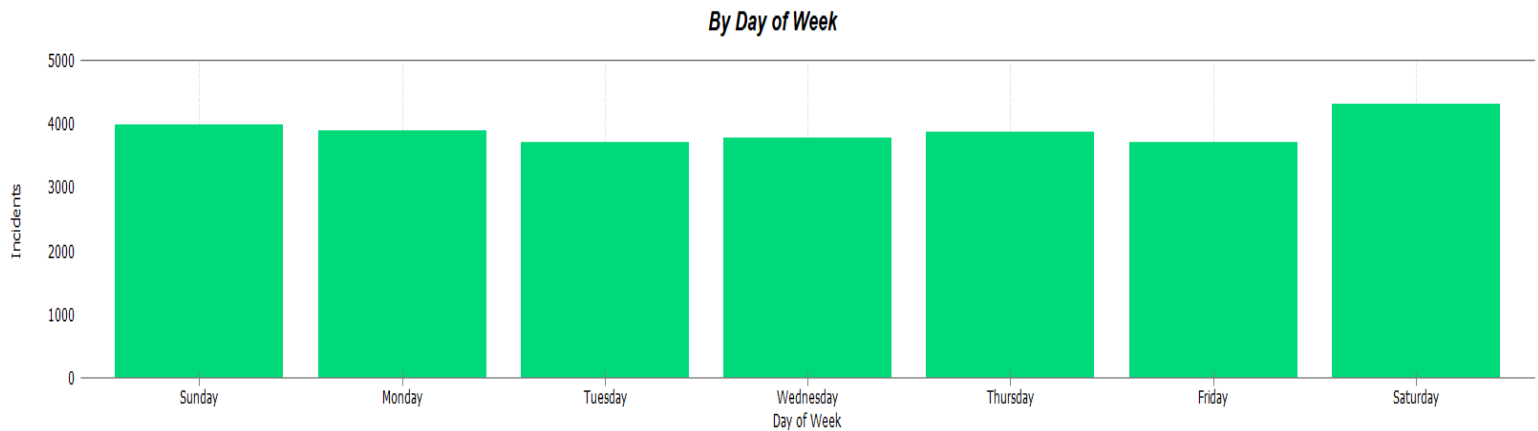
The next part of this analysis provides time and days of the week that all calls for service are recorded into the Communications Center. This part of the review is important in understanding when the most requests for service come into the Communications Center so that staffing needs



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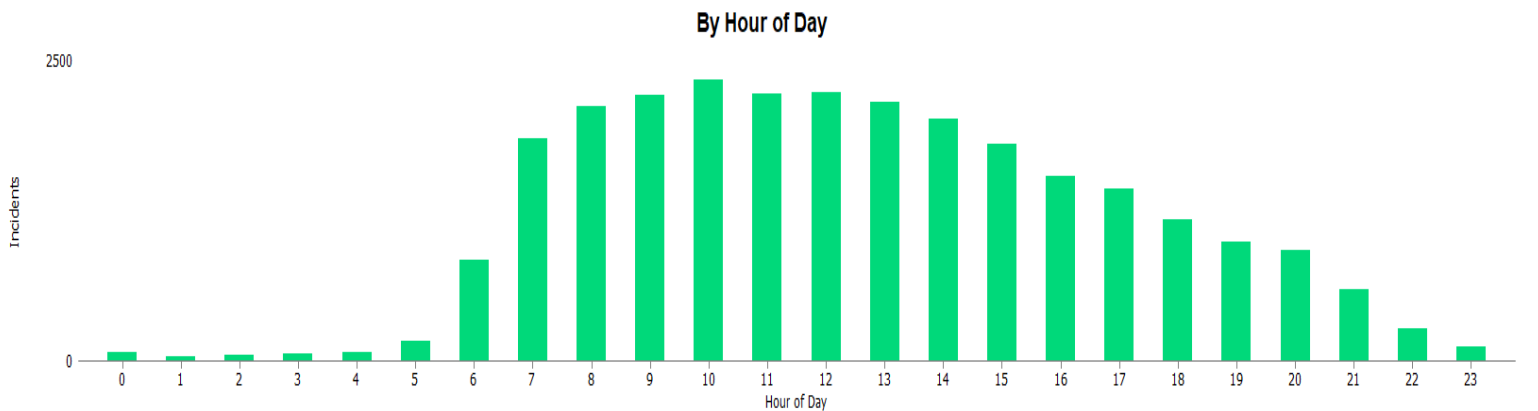


can be implemented to meet this demand. This information is condensed by our CAD/RMS as requests for calls for service are recorded and reflects all calls for service received and dispatched by the Communications Center. The following table reflects the breakdown of calls for service for 2024 by day of the week (Table 23).



**Table 23**

The next table represents the time of day when all requests for police services from the Environmental Conservation Police Division occurred. Again, this information is obtained from the same CAD.RMS and Table 24 represents the breakdown of these requests for 2024 by hour of day using a 24-hour clock.



**Table 24**



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**Officer of the Year 2023**

Each year, the Division recognizes one Officer for their contribution to the outdoors and the Citizens of Connecticut. This recognition is accomplished by a recommendation from field staff, and then Officers from the Division vote on who they felt met the mission and values of the organization for the year. The results of this vote are then tabulated and the Officer with the most votes is recognized as the Officer of the Year. Once this candidate has been identified their information is forwarded to the Shikar-Safari Club (SCI), which is an international Organization that supports conservation and is committed to educating the public in wildlife practices. The Shikar-Safari Club International Wildlife Officer of the Year Award is given annually to wildlife law enforcement Officers throughout the country. The 2023 Officer of the Year was awarded to Conservation Officer Michael Huber.



Officer Huber joined the Connecticut State Environmental Conservation Police in September of 2018 and is currently assigned to the Investigations Unit.

Officer Huber consistently seeks out ways to improve himself. Officer Huber volunteered to participate as a member of the cadre during the Day 1 Orientation Day of the EnCon Police Ranger Academy. Officer Huber also volunteered to supervise the Northwest Rangers where he tracked all their daily activities and logistical needs and acted as a coach and mentor to these employees. Officer Huber was also instrumental in establishing a law enforcement presence on Highland Lake where he worked with the Highland Lake Association, Winchester Police Department, and fellow Officers, to create a collaborative boating safety initiative during the busy 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend.

Officer Huber graduated from the Comprehensive Boating Accident Investigator Course, Safe Capture Course, Crisis Intervention Course, Peer Support for First Responders Course, as well as the Detective's Course sponsored by Central Connecticut State University.



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Despite a year heavy with training and intensive FTO work, Officer Huber was still able to be involved in several cases to include:

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Officer Huber conducted waterfowl hunting enforcement at Wethersfield Cove on the Connecticut River, located in the Town of Wethersfield. While on patrol Officer Huber heard a series of six shots nearly 30 minutes after sunset. Officer Huber contacted the hunter, who was in possession of a loaded shotgun. The hunter did not have his Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp which is required by law. The hunter was cited for his violations and given a court date.

On June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Officer Huber was advised by the Wildlife Division of a bear being harvested illegally in the town of Barkhamsted. Through Officer Huber's careful investigation, he was able to determine that a homeowner's brother came to their home and shot a black bear that was in their back yard. This individual then disposed of the bear in an outdoor furnace. When the individual realized the bear was GPS collared, they removed the collar, and the homeowner called the DEEP Wildlife biologists and advised them of the incident. The individual who killed the bear was subsequently arrested for illegal take of bear.

On August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Officers Huber and Norton responded to Black Rock State Park, located in the town of Watertown, on a report of a domestic violence assault. Officer Norton's initial investigation revealed that his suspect fled the scene and may have obtained an Uber to head to the Waterbury train station to flee to Vermont. Officer Huber responded to the train station and began searching for the suspect. Officer Huber, along with Officers from Waterbury Police Department, located an individual matching the description standing behind the Waterbury Superior Court. Officer Huber was able to positively identify the individual as the suspect and took the subject into custody without incident.

### **DEEP Communications Center**

The Environmental Conservation Police Division provides 24-hour public safety communication services for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Division of Consumer Protection, the Candlewood Lake Authority, the Lake Housatonic Authority, and the Aquarian Water Company Police Division. The information to follow was obtained through DEEP approved radio recording systems and telephone recording systems.

The first set of data points reflect the phone traffic coming into the Communications Center. The table below (Table 25) reflects the activities of the Communications Center from July 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024. This list includes data for the Environmental Conservation Police Division tracking the number and type of calls, the phone lines, and the duration of those calls that came into the Center. The information in Table 26 includes data from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, to provide a complete analysis of the work performed by DEEP Dispatchers. This data was obtained through the phone recording systems of DEEP.



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**Semi-Annual Review of Calls into Dispatch Center (7/1/2024 – 12/31/2024)**

July to December 2024			
Phone Line	Extension	# Of Calls	Duration Of Calls (hours/minutes)
TIP Line	5166	540	11:10
Emergency	3333	11,086	317:30
DAS Towing		68	2:57
Hamzat	3338	2,597	100:06
Officer Line		1,495	51:39
Shellfish		751	5:35
All Dispatcher Ext		4000	104:46
Fax	4069	137	3:06
<b>Totals</b>		<b>20,674</b>	<b>596:54</b>

Table 25

**Annual Review of Calls into Dispatch Center (1/1/2024 – 12/31/2024)**

January to December 2024			
Phone Line	Extension	# Of Calls	Duration Of Calls (hours: minutes)
TIP Line	5166	1166	22:47
Emergency	3333	21,522	624:45
DAS Towing		138	5:36
Hamzat	3338	5,096	192:00
Officer Line		2,973	97:34
Shellfish		1,264	11:22
All Dispatcher Ext		8,115	220:48
Fax	4069	357	7:26
<b>Totals</b>		<b>40,079</b>	<b>1,181:09</b>

Table 26



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The next tables describe the amount of radio traffic that was managed by the Communications Center throughout 2024. The information in Table 27 represents the radio communication traffic analysis from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Table 28 represents the same data points, but the evaluation period was conducted from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. In Table 29 the entire 2024 year was compressed together to reflect totals and highlights peak activities. The data in this list provides the month of evaluation and total events the radio was activated. Lastly, in Table 30 the annual comparison of radio data was created to compare radio activity from 2023 to 2024. The purpose of this data collection is to establish a baseline for radio transmissions conducted by the Communications Center on an annual basis. Push to Talk (PTT) indicates the number of radio activation, where total time is represented in approximate hours and minutes of actual radio airtime. This information was obtained from our Radio Recording systems managed by DEEP.

PTT January - June 2024		
Month	PTT	Total Time (hours/minutes)
January	13,994	17:33
February	16,105	19:44
March	16,858	21:23
April	17,774	22:33
May	30,772	39:17
June	33,125	43:46
Total	128,628	164:18

Table 27

PTT July - December 2024		
Month	PTT	Total Time (hours/minutes)
July	43,734	57:24
August	25,372	32:30
September	21,011	26:14
October	24,758	31:46



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<b>November</b>	17,168	21:43
<b>December</b>	15,970	23:00
<b>Total</b>	<b>148,013</b>	<b>192:40</b>

Table 28

### Push to Talk Radio Activation 2024

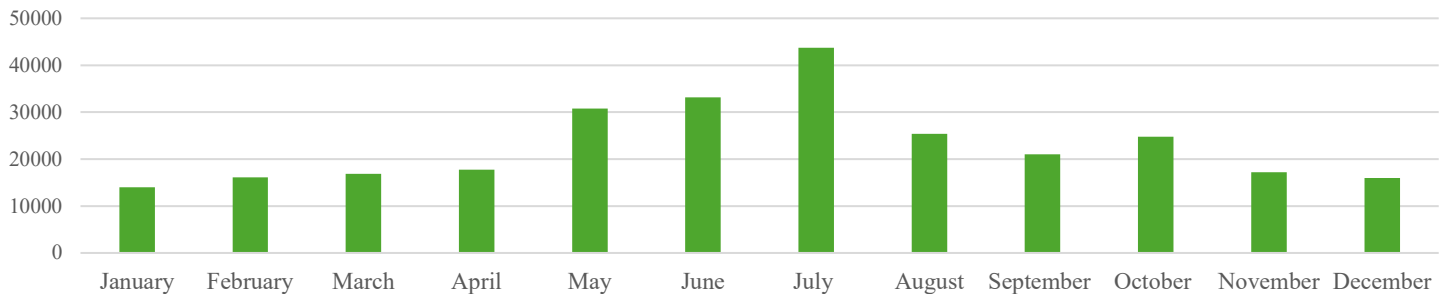


Table 29

### Annual Radio Comparison Totals 2023-2024

<b>Year</b>	<b>Radio PTT Activation</b>	<b>Total on airtime (hours, minutes)</b>
2023	262,854	315:01
2024	276,641	356:59

Table 30

In June of 2023, the Environmental Conservation Police Division introduced a new program into its Communications Center to improve the delivery of essential services to the citizens of Connecticut. This program is Prepared Live. Prepared Live is a software program that allows the Communications Center to identify caller location, provide real time language services, and has the capability to forward a link to a caller's mobile phone to allow dispatchers to observe the incident through the caller's camera on their Smart devices. The software works by sending a text message to the caller, and once that caller accepts the request, it allows personnel to obtain real time information and relay information to first responders. Since the inception of this program, the Communications Center has enhanced its operational capabilities greatly by innovating and leveraging this system to better serve the citizens of Connecticut. Table 31 represents the data obtained from Prepared Live software along with the call type in which the software was used, and the number of incidents recorded by the Prepared Live system. The table below provides a highlight of some of the more routine usages of the system, along with some of the more relevant usages.



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Prepared Live	
January to December 2024	
Type of Call	# of Created Incidents
Injured Wildlife	2,876
Nuisance Wildlife	843
Wildlife Reporting	635
Hangup/Abandoned	19
Rescue/Lost Person	24
Animal Incident	35
Suspicious Item/Activity	3
Vehicle/Driving Incident	7
Missing Person	6
Self-Harm/Suicidal parties	5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,539</b>

Table 31

One of the best attributes of this software is its ability to communicate with individuals who speak a different language. This translation software has provided the dispatchers at the Communications Center with the real-time ability to overcome language barriers instantly by communicating with individuals through a text-translator feature of the software. In an industry where seconds matter, this tool allows callers to text the Communications Center, and the software can translate messages through their mobile device and convert it so effective communication can take place.

On several occasions this year, this tool has assisted the Division in averting potentially dangerous situations where the public was at risk of harm.

On September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the Communications Center received a call from a citizen indicating that an individual at Hammonasset Beach was threatening suicide. The individual sent several photographs to the caller demonstrating the means in which they intended to harm themselves. Through the Prepared Live software, the caller was able to send these photos to the Communications Center. In turn these photographs were immediately sent to responding Officers, who eventually located this subject in an area outside of the State Park.

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, a hiker became lost in the Pachaug State Forest with their two dogs. Through the Prepared Live software, the Communications Center was able to obtain location information directly from the lost hiker. This location was sent to responding Officers who were able to assist the hiker in finding their way out of the woods within minutes of being on scene.

On October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024, another hiker was lost in the town of North Stonington. The hiker had wandered into a swamp and lost their shoes in the mud. The hiker was cold, wet and was extremely disorientated because of the environmental factors. The hiker was able to contact the



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Communications Center and through the Prepared Live software, the dispatcher was able to identify their location in the woods. This information was forwarded to responding Officers who were able to quickly locate and help the hiker out of the woods without injury.

### **Specialty Teams and Training Programs End of Year Report**

The Environmental Conservation Police Division provides several unique services to both the citizens of the State of Connecticut and other state and municipal law enforcement agencies. All the Officers at this agency receive the same standard of training that traditional police officers receive in accordance with POSTC (Police Officer Standards and Training Council). Because of the additional services needed to perform the function of a Conservation Officer, the Division requires our Officers to receive specialized training to perform these functions to national and state standards. These teams are necessary for the agency to achieve its mission and to continue to provide the highest level of service to its constituents.

#### **Vessel Training Program**



The Environmental Conservation Police Division is the primary State agency having responsibility for fisheries, boating law enforcement and the investigation of recreational boating accidents along with search and rescue, and maritime homeland security responsibilities. Considering these responsibilities, Division Officers must crew/operate their assigned patrol vessels with a high degree of skill and knowledge in seamanship, navigation, and safety. To meet these needs, the Division established minimum training qualifications for its Officers crewing and operating the Division's patrol vessels. These qualifications were adopted from a nationally recognized training program designed to develop Officer and agency readiness and maximize



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their ability to safely and effectively complete assigned missions and responsibilities while underway.

Since 2022, the Division has put an emphasis on training Officers in the operation of vessels on inland waterways. The program, Inland Boat Operator course, is a National Association of State Boating Law Administration (NASBLA) sponsored course and reflects national standards for safe boating operation on inland waterways. For 2024, the boating instructors trained 3 officers from the Division and 7 first responders from outside of the Division in Inland Boat operations.

By 2025, all Officers assigned to field operations will have completed this course of instruction. The Division will also continue to provide this training to other state agencies, municipal law enforcement agencies, and first responders across the State of Connecticut.

In addition to Inland Boat Operator, the Division has also begun another training initiative for its field operations on Water Safety and Survival. This training is geared towards the rigors and survival techniques of surviving a fall into water-based environments. In 2024, the instructors trained 7 officers from the Division in this training and 4 sworn officers from other law enforcement agencies.

The Division has been accredited by NASBLA since 2018 and is due for its accreditation review in July 2025. The emphasis on training, records management, and hours of operation on the vessel are all relevant in the Division's ability to maintain its accreditation standard.

### **Recreational Vehicle Training Program (ATV and UTV)**

The Environmental Conservation Police Division holds a responsibility for participating in search and rescue operations in wooded and secluded settings. These locations are often remote and away from any paved roadway and thus necessitate a fleet of recreational vehicles that can access these isolated locations that cannot be accessed by a patrol vehicle. To facilitate the deployment of this fleet of vehicles, the Division has established minimum training qualifications for Officers.



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The instructors of this program received national certification in the instruction of these machines and have brought these standards back to the Officers within the Division. Since 2022, Officers have been trained in the deployment, vehicle systems, and the operational capability of these machines in field environments. The Division stages several of these machines strategically throughout the State of Connecticut which allows for the rapid response to calls for assistance in the remote areas of the State.

In addition to ensuring these machines and the Officers of the Division are in a state of operational readiness, the instructors for this program have facilitated training in this program to other municipality law enforcement agencies and first responders throughout the State of Connecticut.

By 2025, all Officers of the Division will have completed the basic course of instruction in these vehicles, and many Officers have already completed refresher training on ATVs and UTV familiarization training.



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**Fish and Game Academy**



The modern-day Conservation Officer has an intricate and complicated role today. Officers for the Division must be able to navigate criminal law as well as the fish and game laws of the State of Connecticut. To support the knowledge and capabilities of our Officers, the Division has implemented a Fish and Game Academy that is specifically designed to enhance the knowledge of our Officers in fish and game laws.

This inception of this program began in 2023 with assistance from Tom Donlon and Keith Hoffman of the Conservation Education and Firearms Safety Program at DEEP. All new Encon Officers and, when space is available, experienced Conservation Officers take part in a weeklong Fish & Game Academy. This training acclimates Officers to the field side of Game Warden work and introduces them to information and skills needed to become a successful Officer in the Division. Instructed by various subject matter experts from DEEP's Wildlife, Aquaculture, Fisheries, and Encon divisions, the Fish & Game academy encompasses subjects including but not limited to: migratory birds, furbearers, fisheries, deer/moose, raptors, small game/ turkey, nuisance wildlife, and aquaculture. Officers even get hands on experience with firearms/bow hunting safety, animal/ blood tracking, tree stand safety, handling raptors, and long gun familiarization. The Fish & Game Academy is held annually, with 12 Officers completing the program in 2023, 6 Officers in 2024, and forecasted to be 10 Officers in spring of 2025.

Since the implementation of this training, our Officers have gained the knowledge to be more effective and understand their role in conservation efforts here in the State. This program reflects the collaborative efforts undertaken by the Division and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to provide the highest quality of law enforcement services to the citizens of Connecticut.



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### **Hunting Related Shooting Incidents (HRSI)**

Connecticut General Statutes Section 26-62 directs the Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to hold a hearing when any person who, with any weapon or instrument used in hunting, injures, or causes the death of any person, or injures or causes the death of any animal other than a wild animal, or damages the property of another. It also authorizes the Commissioner to suspend, (for cause), the hunting license or hunting privilege of any such person for an unspecified period. To fulfill this statutory obligation, the Environmental Conservation Police Division trains and utilizes a group of Officers who have specialized training on how to investigate incidents that fit within the parameters of this statute.

For the year 2024, the HRSI team responded to two separate incidents within a four-day period during the firearms hunting season.

On November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, the team was activated after the report of an unconscious and unresponsive male was found at the base of his tree stand in the town of Harwinton. Falls from elevated hunting platforms require investigation by the HRSI team. The investigation determined that an unharnessed hunter fell approximately 14' from their elevated tree stand. The investigation found that lack of a harness, weather conditions, tree selection, tree stand condition, and tree stand type all contributed to the incident.

On November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Officers responded to the town of Killingworth, for the report of a hunter suffering a gunshot wound to the arm while hunting pheasants. The HRSI team responded to assist Officers from the Eastern District with processing the scene. The investigation determined that two separate pheasant hunters were actively hunting on a piece of property. One hunter observed a pheasant flush and shot in its direction, striking the second hunter in the arm and torso. The victim was treated for non-life-threatening injuries and the shooter was charged with Discharging a Hunting Weapon toward a Person.

#### **HRSI Training:**

This year the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA), the organization which delivers the HRSI Academy, restructured their curriculum and hosted an HRSI Train the Trainer Course with the intent to have states/regions provide the HRSI training locally as needed to help alleviate travel/cost for agencies. Sergeant DeFelice and Conservation Officer Heath successfully completed this course and are currently working to create Connecticut's HRSI Academy.

The team also provided training to Division personnel related to HRSI incidents to include response, scene management, evidence preparation, ballistics, and documentation.



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Lastly, the HRSI team performed sustainment training on crime scene mapping technology that is utilized by the Division. These training courses took place on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024. These exercises ensure that the team remains in operational readiness to respond to incidents that require in-depth analysis of a scene.

### **Honor Guard**

The Honor Guard for the Environmental Conservation Police Division is a ceremonial unit comprised of sworn members of the Police Division who are highly motivated and maintain exceptionally high standards of appearance, conduct, and who show aptitude for ceremonial duty. The goal of the unit is to render honors, preserve tradition, instill pride, and stimulate esprit de corps. The Honor Guard exists to pay respect and to give honor in exemplary fashion, and more importantly, to remember those whose lives were dedicated to the service of their community.

For the year 2024, the Honor Guard responded to five activations. Those activations are as follows:

- The team was activated for the Funeral Services of CSP TFC Aaron Pelletier
- The Team Responded to the State of New Hampshire for Game Warden Line of Duty Death
- The EnCon Police Ranger Academy Graduation
- The 9/11 Memorial that took place at Sherwood Island
- The Annual wreath laying in remembrance of Officer James Spignesi who was killed in the line of duty November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

#### **Honor Guard Training:**

Officer Huber and Officer Blackwell attended the 2024 National Honor Guard Academy held at the CT Fire Academy.

### **Public Outreach**



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The Environmental Conservation Police Division places the need for community engagement at a high priority level. The relationships created at these events provide several key benefits. First and foremost, engaging with residents demonstrates that our Officers care about building strong relationships in their communities. This helps to build trust between the Division and the citizens that it serves. Improved community trust leads to more residents seeking law enforcement guidance and following best practices as it relates to the outdoors. Additionally, citizens tend to feel supported when emergencies occur and trust the professionalism of the Officers who are there to help.

By having a direct connection to our constituents, the Officers of this Division are more effective and efficient at performing their duties, keeping our communities safer, while boosting the public perception of the Environmental Conservation Police Division. Officers can go to work each day knowing they are proactively impacting their community, preserving the natural resources of the State of Connecticut, and providing the best level of service to our constituents.

In 2024 the Public Outreach team attended 44 scheduled events statewide. Again, like last year, this was only the number of scheduled, large scale, public outreach events, and not the total public outreach contacts by Officers. Of the 44 events the outreach team attended, 13 of these events were Career Fairs, both the Mohegan Sun Boat Show and Outdoor Expo, 5 local fairs including Woodstock, Goshen, Durham, Harwinton and Bethlehem. The team also participated in the No Child Left Inside Events sponsored by DEEP, Federal Duck Stamp Selection Event, local festivals, numerous Nigh Out events, 3 Police Cadet Academies, and local Kids Health and Safety Days. The team also conducted numerous interviews including specific stories for Boating Safety and Operation Dry Water Campaign.

As a part of our commitment to being connected to the citizens of Connecticut, the Division is in the process of purchasing a new Public Outreach Trailer. The current outreach trailer is outdated and lacks the technological capabilities of newer models. Last year, the outreach trailer was



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deployed to 18 events statewide, and this purchase will modernize the equipment and better connect our Conservation Officers with the people we serve.

As an agency, Officers of this Division participated in a total of 271 outreach events across the State of Connecticut. While the outreach team focuses directly on large scale planned events, the efforts of the entire division reflect the commitment of the Environmental Conservation Police Division to being one with our citizens, and these efforts have received positive attention that continues to have a beneficial impact for the agency.

### **Boating Accident Reconstruction Unit (B.A.R.U.)**

Within the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Law Enforcement Division has statutory authority under sections 15-121(c), 15-149a, and 15-149(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes assigning administrative responsibility for the provisions within those statutes, acting as a repository for official state records, preparation of required forms or reports, and acting as liaison to the United States Coast Guard for boating accidents.

In instances where there is a death of an occupant of a vessel, there is an accident involving a law enforcement vessel, serious physical injury to an occupant of a vessel that may be life threatening, or an occupant of the vessel is missing/unaccounted for, the B.A.R.U. may be activated to respond.



For the year 2024, members of the B.A.R.U. team conducted the following:

B.A.R.U. had one full reconstruction, and that accident occurred in the Town of Old Saybrook. For this incident B.A.R.U. recovered and seized the vessel, completed a scene inspection and documentation of these vessels. The investigators applied for and were granted three search warrants, whereby they were able to secure evidence important to the findings of the investigation into the cause of this accident. This B.A.R.U. report was turned over to the district



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investigator and case Officer for use in completing their investigation into the incident. Six B.A.R.U. members worked on this incident over the course of several weeks.

In another incident, Sergeant Ulkus and Investigator Kiely completed an Engine Control Unit download and analyzed that data as it pertained to a vessel involved in a fatal incident on Candlewood Lake. After obtaining a search warrant, this team was able to secure evidence important to the investigation.

While both cases are still ongoing, the information obtained from these efforts will support the investigation into these unfortunate events that took place.

#### Training:

This year the members of B.A.R.U. participated in the annual training program which reviews engine and GPS data retrieval. This training encompasses not only on how to find this evidence, but how to secure and document it as well.

#### Chemical Immobilization Team



Chemical immobilization equipment and drugs used by this Division are used solely for the purpose of capturing wild animals for relocation, rehabilitation, euthanization, and/or scientific research purposes in conjunction with the Wildlife Division.

For the year 2024, the EnCon Police Chemical Immobilization Team was suspended due to a new licensing process. The Division has since met both State and Federal guidelines and is completely licensed to redeploy this service back into operation.



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**Training:**

Several Officers attended the Safe Capture course to become certified in deploying chemicals into wildlife. Sergeant Norton, Officer Curran, Officer Heath, and Officer Nivolo all went through this training in 2024 and are ready to bring these new skills to the field.

**PEER Support Team**



The Division recognizes the stress and trauma that Officers feel every day. The PEER team functions as a support and debriefing resource for employees and their families. The PEER team provides support to personnel experiencing personal and work-related stress. It also provides support during and following critical or traumatic incidents resulting from the performance of duty. PEER team members include officers and permanent staff from within the Division who volunteer their time to support employees. These members act as listeners and/or facilitators between employees who request and/or require assistance and the professional providers of such assistance.

For the year 2024, Officers from within the Division responded to 25 Untimely Death related investigations throughout the State of Connecticut. Officers spent over 3,100 hours this past year investigating these incidents. Time spent on the investigations include: search and rescue efforts, recovery efforts, death notifications, interviews with family/friends and other witnesses, forensic examination into evidence, and documentation of these efforts. Being completely committed to these investigations takes a toll on everyone involved, and having the PEER team as a resource helps field operations manage the stress of tasks associated with these investigations.

For 2024, the PEER team welcomed 7 new members to the team. Officer's Buonocore, Johnson, Davis, Pulver, Lenois, Hurlburt, and Dispatcher Campbell all bring new visions, experiences, and values that will continue to support our staff and move the Division forward.

**Division K9 Teams**



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The Environmental Conservation Police Division utilizes canines as a valuable tool that supplements patrol operations. Utilization of canines requires adherence to procedures and continuous training that properly control their senses of smell, hearing, and physical attributes. As such, this agency seeks to channel their specialized capabilities into legal and acceptable crime prevention and control activities.

For the year 2024, the K9 teams of the Environmental Conservation Police Division responded to 264 incidents, of which 193 usages of the K9 were deployed. The breakdown of these deployments is recorded in Table 32:

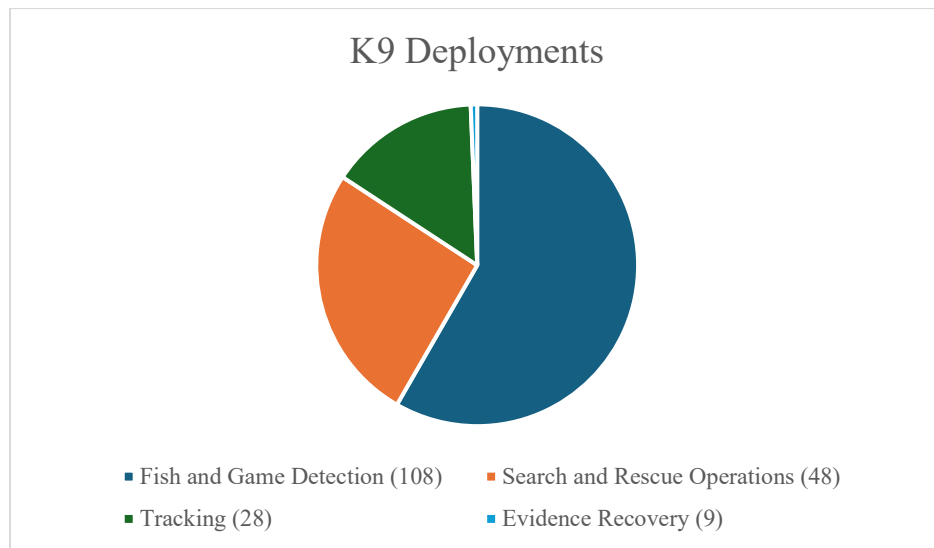


Table 32

Some of the significant usages of these K9 teams have led to the apprehension of violators, and recovery of important evidence linked to criminal investigations. Below are just a few examples of how this program has supplemented the patrol operations of the Division.

On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024, K-9 Archer was dispatched to Black Pond State Boat Launch on a report of a suicidal individual, armed with a knife, who had just kidnapped another individual in a neighboring jurisdiction. This subject was eventually located and detained, but was no longer in possession of the knife, which was later determined to have been used to commit the kidnapping. Multiple K-9 teams conducted a search of the area of the Black Pond State Boat Launch and surrounding trails to locate this knife. Unfortunately, due to weather conditions that hampered search efforts, the knife could not be immediately located despite the efforts of the numerous K9 teams that had responded.



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On December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, a secondary search was performed of the areas from the previous day. K9 Archer indicated alerts towards a downed tree. With improved weather conditions K9 Archer located a kitchen knife that was visible in the leaves below the downed tree. The successful recovery of this knife supports the complaint made by the victim and could be pivotal in the prosecution of this investigation.

Another significant investigation occurred on the Lower Housatonic River. The details of this case are as follows:

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Conservation Officers were patrolling the Housatonic River for illegal poaching activity. While conducting these patrols, Officers saw an angler climb the riverbank, climb over the guard rail, cross the road, enter a steep wooded hillside on the opposite side of the road, and disappear into the woods. The angler appeared to be carrying something heavy and was not using a flashlight. After a few minutes the angler returned to the riverbank empty handed and continued to fish. Officers were able to see there was a group of six individuals actively fishing in the river.

Seeing this activity, the Officers who were with K9 Luna contacted the anglers. Investigation determined that two of the individuals in this group had no fishing license. The group also claimed they did not catch or retain any striped bass. K9 Luna was deployed where she located four separate laundry style bags each containing striped bass. Each bag was buried in the ground and covered with leaves. The bags spanned a 75-yard-long stretch of roadside. In total there were 34 striped bass located, ranging from 12.5" to 25" in length. The daily creel limit for striped bass is one per licensed angler per day. The slot limit for striped bass is 28" - 31", anything less than or greater than must be immediately released. In total, these anglers had 64 striped bass violations and two license violations. The photograph associated with this investigation is posted below.



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### **Accreditation**

This year, the Environmental Conservation Police Division continued along its journey towards being fully accredited. This year, the Division hired a new accreditation manager, Christina Michaud. Mrs. Michaud has extensive experience in law enforcement and the accreditation process. She has worked with members of the Division on improving reporting, evidentiary processes, and has been an instrumental voice as the Division undergoes its facility projects to enhance security.

This year, as a part of the Accreditation mandate set forth by the State of Connecticut, the Division has completed its Tier I review with proof of compliance and submitted that to the POST Council. On a national level, there are only two other law enforcement organizations (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Virginia Conservation Police) that enforce Fish and Game laws that have achieved accreditation status. The Division has already met the POSTC requirements ahead of schedule and will continue to embrace this process. The Division is eager to be the third Fish and Wildlife agency in the country to achieve national/state level accreditation.

### **Investigations Unit**

In June 2024, the Division created a new initiative to improve its operational efficiency and effectiveness. A Criminal Investigation Unit was established that is dedicated to enhancing the



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investigative abilities of the Division by supporting field operations as it pertains to complex investigations. Currently, the unit is staffed by three Investigators and one Sergeant. This unit is operated out of the Eastern District, but investigators respond to incidents throughout the State of Connecticut. This unit, and the support capabilities it provides for field operations, is intended to give field staff the opportunity to focus more on community policing and crime prevention issues that they encounter, instead of taking them out of the field to focus on complex investigations.

Some of the duties of Investigators include assisting Officers in preparation of search and arrest warrants, assisting with processing of crimes scenes and evidence collection, conducting background investigations for applicants, participating in regional investigative briefings, and being available for after-hours response to crime scenes. Investigators review and accept case referrals from District Captains to conduct and complete investigations that are complex or serious in nature such as fatalities, incidents that may have potential for increased public scrutiny, or other cases that are assigned.

Additionally, Investigators coordinate with other law enforcement agencies and State's Attorney Offices from 13 judicial districts to share intelligence and investigative leads. Several Investigators are cross trained on other teams supported by the Division so they can assist these units as needed. This cross training ensures that investigations meet the best practice standards of the Division and that these cases receive appropriate investigative support.

Since the inception of this unit, the Investigators in this unit have contributed to several significant investigations to include untimely deaths, burglaries, and sexual assaults. This unit, and the successes that it has already achieved, will raise the professional standards of the Division while also providing an additional service to the citizens of the State of Connecticut by having the capabilities to thoroughly investigate crimes against people and facilitate needed resources to bring resolution to complex cases.

For the year 2024, members of the Investigations Unit participated in the following cases:

- Unit members assumed 15 investigations from District Officers.
- Unit members assisted District Officers with 23 cases which resulted in 7 arrests.
- Unit members executed 27 search warrants for evidence.

Members of the Investigations Unit attended the following training courses:

- 3 members of the unit attended Special Victims Investigations class.
- 3 members of the unit attended Sirchie Forensic Training class.
- 2 members of the unit attended Sex Assault Investigations class.
- 2 members of the unit attended DNA for Today's Investigations class.



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-1 member of the unit attended a Crime Scene Procedure class.

### **EnCon Ranger Program**



As previously stated, the duties of a Connecticut Environmental Conservation Officer are unique and varied. The expectations of the Officers within this Division are expected to enforce all Boating, Hunting, and Fishing laws in the state, as well as patrol our state parks and forests for any criminal violations and for public safety. With 62 sworn Officer positions, the Division strives to equally deploy its resources across the State to be effective. To increase omnipresence in our State Parks, the Division reimaged its seasonal conservation officer program to fit within the legal requirements of law enforcement.

Re-established in 2021, the EnCon Ranger Program represents the Division's efforts to proactively create a safe environment in our State Parks, but also to utilize this program as a recruitment tool for prospective law enforcement candidates. EnCon Rangers are committed to helping the public and providing a positive experience for our park visitors.

EnCon Rangers receive 120 hours of training as recommend by POSTC (Police Officers Standards and Training Council) prior to being deployed to their assigned work area. The Division is responsible for creating lesson plans, scheduling, facilities, coaching, mentorship, and equipment so that these Rangers can be deployed into a field environment. These Rangers are typically assigned to one or more of the larger State Parks. Rangers work directly under the supervision of full-time EnCon Officers and act as our eyes, ears, as well as spokespersons to



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educate park patrons regarding the safety and well-being at beaches and campgrounds. In 2024, the Division graduated 15 new EnCon Rangers from its training program, while also welcoming back 10 Rangers from previous years of service.

Many EnCon Rangers have taken their experience in this seasonal role to continue their law enforcement journey and work in federal, state, and municipal law enforcement agencies. The Division has also benefited from this program by hiring four (4) full time Officers and two (2) dispatchers who were a part of this seasonal program. These efforts have been beneficial to the seasonal employees who have a chance to grow professionally from this experience, interacting with the countless visitors who recreate in our State Parks, and the Division creating a win-win for everyone.

### **Conclusion from Colonel Lewis**

This annual report of activity for 2024 shows the varied tasks and responsibilities of today's Conservation Enforcement Officer. Beyond our traditional roles as game wardens focused solely on protecting our natural resources for future generations to use and enjoy, today finds that the modern Conservation Officer is also responsible for criminal investigations on state lands and waters, boating enforcement, patrolling and providing traditional police services to Connecticut's 110 state parks and 32 state forests among many other duties. The additional Officers added in 2024, which brings our total sworn Officer count to 62, which includes 46 field Officers, has allowed the Division to increase its activity and become more proactive.

In 2024 the Division was able to dedicate one Sergeant and one Officer to assist the Lake Housatonic and Candlewood Lake authorities with training and to be able to provide on-water boat patrol coverage during the summer boating season on Candlewood Lake. In addition, staffing levels allowed one Officer from the Eastern District to be dedicated to patrolling the Connecticut River during the summer boating season. Our K9 teams can be more proactive with the additional support that more field Officers allow. As previously mentioned, with the increase in staffing we have been able to create and support an Investigations Unit which has been successful in allowing Officers to return to proactive community policing versus spending their time following up on lengthy criminal investigations.

For 2025, the Division looks forward to beginning work on our tier II POSTC accreditation requirements and continuing to invest in our Officers with relevant training and long overdue facilities updates. The Division will strive to continue to find new and creative ways to reach out too and connect with the citizens of Connecticut, introduce them to our Officers and the work they do, and educate the public about the great outdoor opportunities the State has to offer.