

Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police Blotter: July 11-17

Reminder for the week: Practice safe boating, including wearing your lifejacket

DOVER – To achieve public compliance through education and enforcement actions that help conserve Delaware’s fish and wildlife resources and ensure safe boating and public safety, DNREC’s Division of Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police officers between July 11-17 made 1,642 contacts with anglers, boaters and the general public, including 311 vessel boardings for boating safety and fishing regulation compliance checks. Officers responded to 54 complaints and issued 24 citations, one of which was related to the C&D Canal Conservation Area and associated recreational trail, where there is an increased Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police presence.

An incident of note:

- On July 16, Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police cited Robert S. Osbourne, 48, of Avondale, Pa., for operating a vessel under the influence of alcohol (OUI) and no navigation lights near Indian River Inlet. Osbourne was given a mandatory appearance at Justice of the Peace Court 14 in Georgetown at a later date.

Citations issued by category, with the number of charges in parentheses, included:

Fisheries Conservation: Recreational: Unlicensed fishing (3)*, possession of undersized blue crabs (3), possession of undersized summer flounder (1).

Boating and Boating Safety: Operating a vessel under the

influence of alcohol (2), negligent operation of a vessel (1), no lifejacket on a child age 12 or younger as required by law (2), failure to observe slow-no-wake zone (1), operating an unregistered vessel (3), failure to maintain a proper lookout (1), no boating education certificate (4), no fire extinguisher (1), and no navigation lights (1).

Public Safety: Clamming in an area under seasonal closure (1).

* Citation issued at the C&D Canal Conservation Area: unlicensed fishing (1).

A DNREC press release was issued related to this week's citations: [Maryland man cited for OUI after boating accident near Fenwick Island.](#)

Are you AWARE?

DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police remind boaters to practice safe boating, including use of lifejackets. Delaware law requires that all personal watercraft (PWC) operators and all children 12 years old and younger aboard a vessel of any type wear a lifejacket while underway. The law does not require wearing a lifejacket for those age 13 to adult on vessels other than PWCs; however, boat owners/operators are required to carry a readily-accessible lifejacket for each person aboard a vessel.

"Vessel operators are responsible to make sure that children aboard their boat are wearing lifejackets – and they can set the example by also wearing one," said Sgt. John McDerby, Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police. "Although the law does not require ages 13 and older to wear a lifejacket except for personal watercraft, we strongly recommend lifejacket use by everyone aboard a vessel in Delaware waters, especially anyone with limited swimming skills. It's a smart choice that can prevent an unnecessary tragedy."

The same requirements that apply to vessels also apply to paddleboards, canoes and kayaks operating on Delaware waters.

All paddleboards, canoes and kayaks must have a wearable lifejacket and a whistle or other sound-producing device aboard and readily accessible. "Regardless of the size or type of vessel, if you fall overboard or capsize, stay with your vessel for a better chance of being found sooner," Sgt. McDerby added.

Boaters also should ensure their vessel is ready for a trouble-free day enjoying Delaware's waterways by performing a pre-departure check. Before leaving home, you should have:

- All current required licenses and registrations, including boat registration, boating safety certificate, boat ramp certificate if required and fishing license(s);
- Enough lifejackets for everyone on board, including children age 12 or younger who are required by Delaware law to wear them; for vessels 16 feet or more in length, a throwable life preserver is also required;
- Plenty of water to stay hydrated and sunscreen to protect against sunburn, which can be severe on the water.
- Checked the local weather forecast;
- Checked the vessel for working navigation lights, steering and throttle controls;
- Checked its oil, fuel and fluid levels;
- Checked for fuel leaks, including hose clamps and connections;
- Drained all water from the engine compartment or bilge, and replaced and secured the bilge plug;
- A fully-charged engine battery, emergency flares and a fire extinguisher;
- A marine radio and/or a fully-charged cell phone in a secure pocket and sealed in a plastic bag; and
- Left a [float plan](#) with a friend, family member or local marina.

For more information on safe boating practices in Delaware,

please visit [Delaware Boating Safety](#).

DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife recognizes and thanks the majority of anglers, hunters and boaters who comply with and support Delaware's fishing, hunting and boating laws and regulations. Citizens are encouraged to report fish, wildlife and boating violations to the Delaware Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police by calling 302-739-4580. Wildlife violations may also be reported anonymously to Operation Game Theft by calling 800-292-3030 or online at <http://de.gov/ogt>.

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