

13 students graduate from DNREC Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police Advanced Youth Academy

NEW CASTLE – Thirteen students, their families, officers, and instructors recently celebrated the completion of the week-long DNREC Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police's Advanced Youth Academy, with the graduation ceremony at Cabela's in Newark.



Front row, left to right: Alistair Bebbington, Connor McDerby, Hannah Price, Noah Kracyla, Trevor Smith, Anthony Puleo, and Riley Graham; Back row, left to right: Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police Captain Brian Pollock, Joseph McDermott, Ross Alexander, Carter Wilkins, Benjamin Burris, Troy Christiansen, Gage Williams, and State Representative Jeff Spiegelman.

At the advanced Natural Resources Police academy, held for the

first time this year, students ages 12 to 15 acquired skills for camping, fishing, and hunting, and were exposed to the various aspects of a Natural Resources Police officer's daily routine. Students completed their turkey hunter certification, participated in a fishing derby, assisted wildlife biologists with capturing and banding mourning doves, participated in skeet shooting as well as .22 caliber rifle target shooting, and camped at Lums Pond State Park primitive campground on Friday night. To finish up the camp, students participated in a public outreach event with officers displaying the Operation Game Theft trailer at Cabela's in Newark.

"Our students are our greatest environmental stewards. The Youth Academy is geared towards building their knowledge base of some of the things we do at DNREC, while getting them out into the natural resources we are working to protect," said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. "By returning to take this advanced course, these students have taken the next step toward possible environmental careers – perhaps even with DNREC."

Students who completed the New Castle County Advanced Youth Academy, held at DNREC's Ommelanden Hunter Education Training Center in New Castle, were: Ross Alexander of Bear; Alistair Bebbington of Newark; Benjamin Burris of Lothian, Md.; Troy Christiansen of Dover; Riley Graham of Townsend; Noah Kracyla of Townsend; Connor McDerby of Newark; Joseph McDermott of Townsend; Hannah Price of Stroudsburg, Pa.; Anthony Puleo of Newark; Trevor Smith of Middletown; Carter Wilkins of Landenberg, Pa.; and Gage Williams of Marydel. Ten out of the 13 students were returning students who had completed the inaugural Natural Resources Police Basic Youth Academy held in July 2016.

In addition to the students' earning their certificates for completing their turkey hunter education class at graduation, Natural Resources Police instructors presented individual awards to five class members. Riley Graham took home the

leadership award; Hannah Price received the sportsmanship award; Gage Williams won the sharpshooting award (skeet); and Noah Kracyla was recognized for fishing skills as well as his sharpshooting skills (rifle target shooting).

DNREC Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police also thank the following sponsors who helped make this year's youth academy possible: Cabela's; Signature Stitches of Dover; Delaware Chapter of Ducks Unlimited; Delaware Chapter of the Wild Turkey Federation; Quality Deer Management Association; PSC Contracting, Inc.; and BJ's Wholesale Club.

[Learn more](#) about the Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police and the Youth Academy.

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