



The Delaware Department of Natural Resources
and Environmental Control



2020 Surf Fishing Report

February 25, 2020

2019: A Year In Review

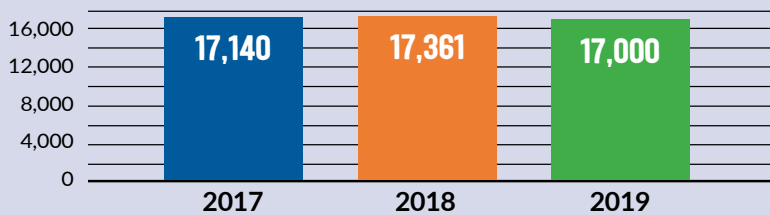
New Surf-Fishing Tag Cap Implemented in 2019

In January 2019, the Delaware Parks & Recreation Advisory Council recommended limiting the number of surf-fishing permits issued annually to no more than 17,000 and raising surf fishing permit fees.

The cap, which was implemented on a first-come, first-served basis to manage a limited resource and to protect against overcrowding of parks beaches, was reached July 2, 2019.

By limiting the number of permits, the Division is able to manage the state's surf-fishing program more efficiently, aligning with DNREC's priority to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience at Delaware state park beaches.

SURF TAG SALES COMPARISON



Park staff at the Indian River Life-Saving Station smile on July 2 as the Division issues exactly 17,000 surf fishing permits in 2019, the first year a cap was placed on permit sales. There was much concern about ensuring the Division did not go over the cap with multiple locations issuing permits statewide. Pictured, from left to right, are IRLSS Site Manager Laura Scharle, Ranger Dylon Parks, and Kim Hoffman.



Video Launch: 'How to Surf Fish at Delaware State Parks'

Over the winter, the Division developed an educational surf-fishing video that covers the rules, regulations, and best practices for surf-fishing in Delaware.

Topics include how to obtain a surf-fishing permit, what equipment you need, how to drive on the beach, what to do if you get stuck, and more.

The Division extends a special thanks to the Delaware Mobile Surf Fishermen (DMS) for their contributions to the video, which has been viewed more than 8,000 times since its release in December. To view and share the video, go to <https://tinyurl.com/rsmf459>.

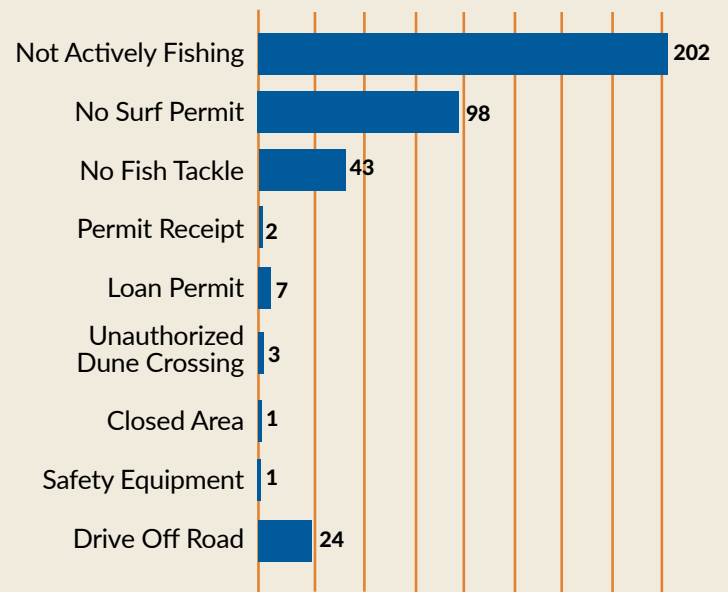
Park Rangers Conduct Targeted Enforcement of Surf-Fishing Regulations

Park rangers issued more than 500 citations and warnings for various violations of surf fishing regulations during targeted enforcement operations in the summer of 2019. The enforcement efforts were conducted in response to complaints about visitors failing to abide by regulations, particularly the “actively engaged” rule of surf fishing.

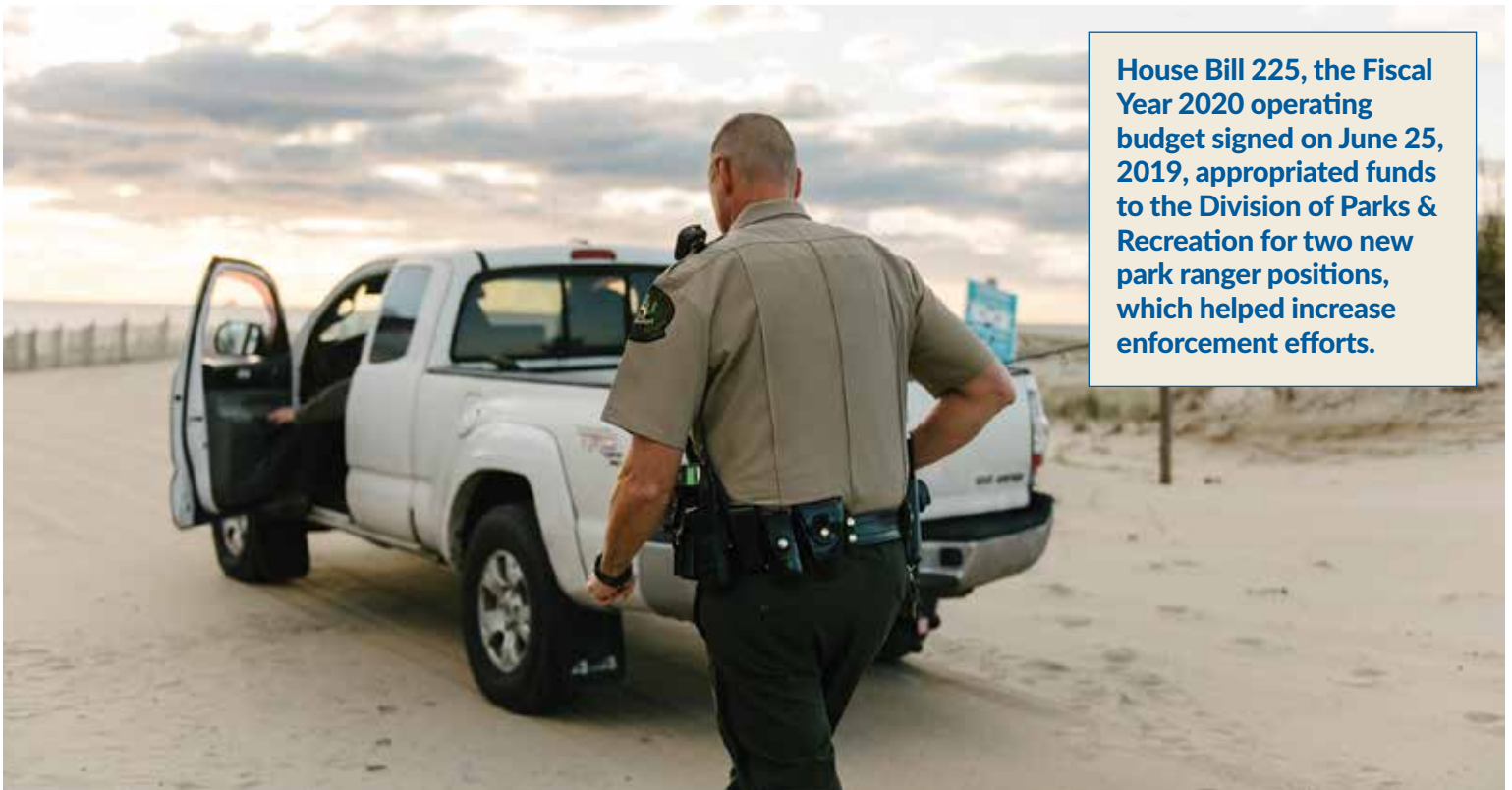
The Division continued its proactive education about surf-fishing regulations on Delaware State Parks beaches by including information with surf-fishing permit purchases, publishing a surf fishing report, offering classes, and producing an informative video. For the first time in park history, rangers conducted compliance checks of every vehicle at each park on select days, finding a small percentage of noncompliance.

Surf-fishing permit holders who drive on designated multi-use beaches must possess a valid surf-fishing vehicle permit, a jack, shovel, low-pressure tire gauge, board, tow strap, and proper saltwater fishing tackle.

SURF FISHING ARRESTS 2019



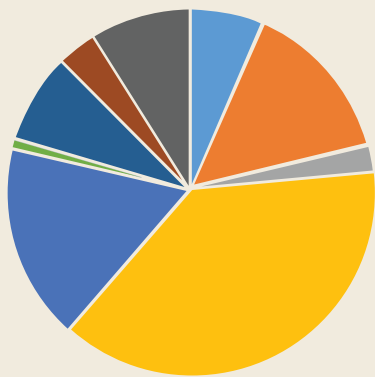
“Actively engaged in surf fishing” means a person is taking all reasonable and necessary actions to maximize the probability of hooking and landing game fish by rod, reel, and line attached to a baited rig, artificial lure, or artificial fly. Persons are also actively engaged in surf fishing when they are within 50 feet of their fishing equipment and are tending, casting and recasting their fishing equipment. Vehicle use on the designated beaches is restricted to persons actively engaged in surf fishing.



House Bill 225, the Fiscal Year 2020 operating budget signed on June 25, 2019, appropriated funds to the Division of Parks & Recreation for two new park ranger positions, which helped increase enforcement efforts.

Captain Steve Savidge of the Delaware Natural Resources Police checks to make sure a park visitor is in compliance with surf fishing rules and regulations at Cape Henlopen State Park.

2019 SURF PERMIT SUMMARY



Total 2019 Issued:
17,000

- Surf Firefighter (1,096)
- Surf Resident (6,423)
- Surf 2 Year Senior Resident (1,359)
- Surf Non-Resident (2,457)
- Surf 2 Year Resident (2,953)
- Surf Senior Non-Resident (592)
- Surf 2 Year Non-Resident (448)
- Surf 2 Year Senior Non-Resident (151)
- Surf Senior Resident (1,521)

Beach Driving Clinics

In 2019, 109 people took advantage of Delaware State Parks beach driving clinics held throughout the year. The classes allow prospective drive-on surf fishers to follow park staff out to the beach to practice driving on the sand and to learn park rules, licensing requirements, and tips from park staff to maximize safety while driving on the beach.

This year's classes will be held Saturdays March 14, April 4, April 11, and May 2, and Friday, April 24.

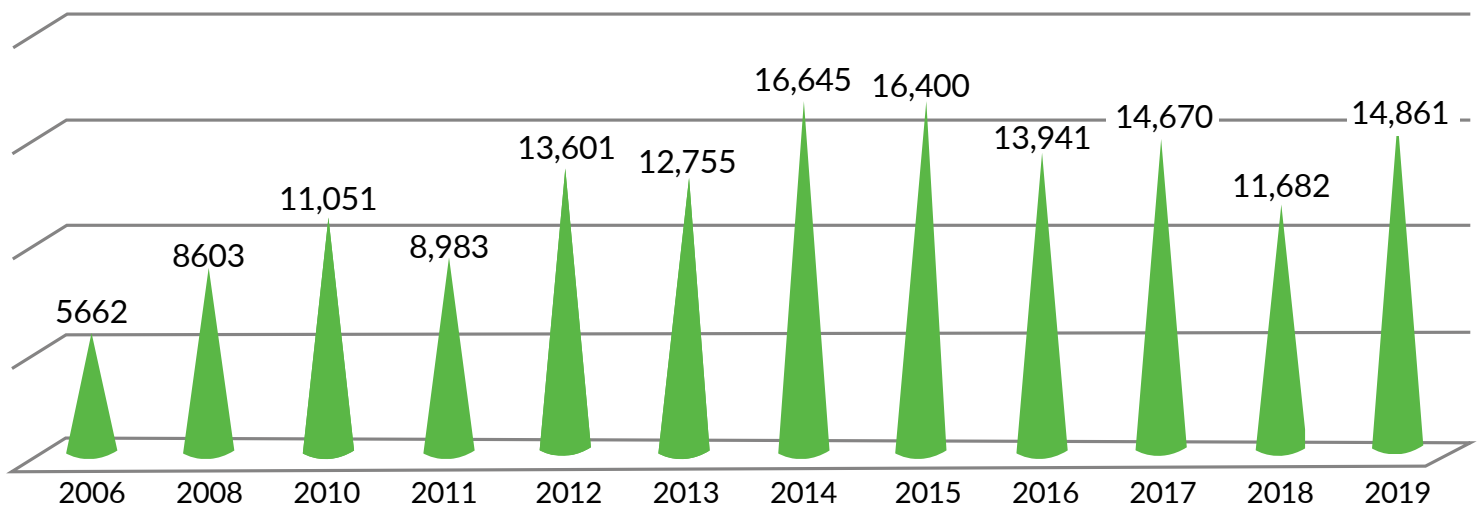
Participants must have a valid surf tag and the required surf-fishing equipment.

The cost is \$8 per person and pre-registration is required. For more information, call (302)-227-6991.



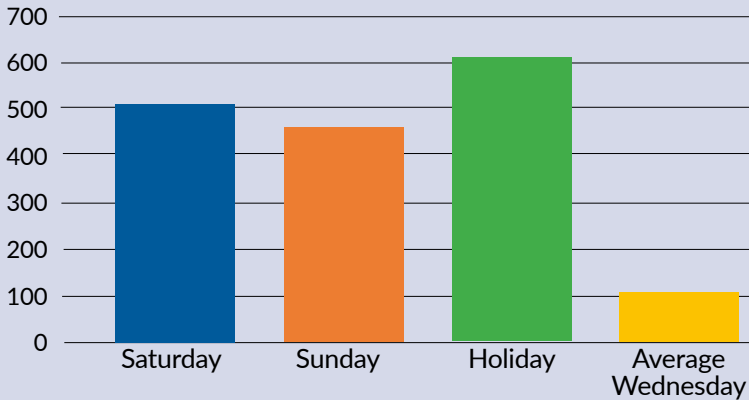
Total Number of Vehicles on Beaches at Cape Henlopen

■ Total Count



2019 Beach Counts at Delaware Seashore State Park

Average Counts



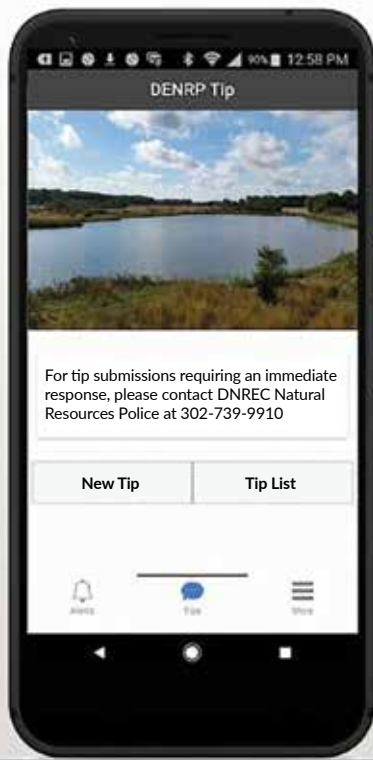
Senate Bill 66 Gives Limited Authoritative Powers to Seasonal Park Patrol Officers

Senate Bill 66, which unanimously passed the Delaware Senate and House of Representatives in June 2019, gives seasonal park patrol officers the authority to write simple citations. The bill was sponsored by Sens. Parade, Ennis, Hocker, Pettyjohn, and Sokola, and Reps. Heffernan and Johnson.

Similar to the authority of Delaware State Police cadets and seasonal officers in beach towns such as Dewey, Rehoboth, and Ocean City, longer-tenured park patrol officers who attend additional training are now able to cite park visitors for minor violations such as failure to pay park entrance fees, littering, driving on the beach without a surf-fishing permit, and having a dog off-leash.

The Division's goal is to authorize 15 to 20 park patrol officers annually, which will allow full-time rangers to focus on more pressing matters, and help recruit and retain park patrol officers interested in law enforcement careers.

Submit an anonymous tip to your agency.



DENRP TIP



TIP411 (or 847411) The DENRP Tip411 App

The Department now offers a smartphone app to give the public an easy way to report environmental crimes and concerns. The Delaware Natural Resources Police (DENRP) Tip411 app also gives Natural Resources Police a new tool to share important information with the public.

Users can report crimes, emergencies or problems. They'll also receive notifications from the Department about closures of parks or other public lands, public safety alerts, and more.

Anonymous Reports by Text Message

Anyone can send anonymous reports of crimes, emergencies and other problems directly via text message by texting their report, along with the appropriate keyword, to TIP411 (847411). For reports to the Environmental Crimes Unit, use ECUTIP. For reports to Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police, use FWTIP. For reports to State Park Rangers, use STATEPARKSTIP.

The app is available for free download by searching "DENRP" via the Google Play Store or iTunes App Store. The app can be used with 100 percent anonymity, as Tip411's technology removes all identifying information before Natural Resources Police officers see the tips.



DELAWARE STATE PARKS
YOUR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE STARTS HERE

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
and The Delaware Division of Parks & Recreation
89 Kings Highway Dover, DE 19901