

DEPARTMENT Conservation Officer Career

Lesson Plan / Instructor Guide

COURSE TITLE: New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) Conservation Officer Career

INSTRUCTIONAL GOAL: Students will learn what a Department Conservation Officer is, what they do, how to become one and encourage them to stay in shape by starting to exercise.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of this block of instruction the participant(s) will be able to:

1. Understand what a Department Conservation Officer is.
2. Understand what a Department Conservation Officer does.
3. Understand what requirements it takes to become a Department Conservation Officer.
4. Begin their own personal at-home work out regiment which can include stretching out, push-ups, sit-ups, jumping jacks, walking and jogging to stay healthy and to become better physically fit.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS: Power point lecture.

HANDOUTS: New Mexico Hunting Rules & Information Booklet
http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/publications/rib/2020/hunting/2020_2021-New-Mexico-Hunting-Rules-and-Info.pdf .

New Mexico Fishing Rules & Information Booklet
http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/publications/rib/2020/fishing/2020_21-New-Mexico-Fishing-Rules-and-Info.pdf .

COURSE DURATION: Lecture and video approximately 20-30 minutes. Exercise times can vary depending on individual and level of exercise.

CURRICULUM REFERENCES:
Conservation Officer Job Description & How to Apply (updated 9/5/19).
<http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/enforcement/career/Conservation-Officer-Job-Description-and-Application-Information-September-2019.pdf>

Conservation Officer Physical Fitness Standards.

<http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/enforcement/career/Conservation-Officer-Physical-Fitness-Standards-2015.pdf>

Department Public Webpage for Careers as a Conservation Officer.

<http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/enforcement/career-advancement/>

SAFETY CONSIDERATION: Stretch out before exercising. Make sure you're healthy enough to perform exercises. If you need to see a physician or physical trainer before exercising please do. Don't overdo it and pace yourself.

EQUIPMENT, PERSONNEL, AND SUPPLIES NEEDED: Laptop or computer (with presentation uploaded), projector or screen, jump drive with presentation or uploaded to computer, power cords (if needed), extension cords (if needed) and speakers. Stop watch for exercises and log book and pen to record times and goals.

NOTE: Please check out curriculum references and handouts for material to look over.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Anyone interested on becoming a New Mexico Department of Game and Fish Conservation Officer.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: None.

EVALUATION STRATEGY: No written or oral test. Just continue trying to surpass your baseline of push-ups, sit-ups and your time on your run.

AUTHOR & ORIGINATION DATE: Storm W. Usrey, March 26, 2020.

REVISION / REVIEW DATE(S): N/A.

REVISED / REVIEWED BY: N/A.

CRITERION TEST: N/A.

CRITERION TEST ANSWERS: N/A.

COURSE OUTLINE:

- I. Introduction
 - A. Give name and title.
- II. Give Goals and Objectives.
- III. New Mexico Department of Game and Fish Information.
 - A. Mission Statement for New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.
 - B. Office Locations.
 - C. How many officers around the state and structure of Field Operations.
 - D. Locations of hatcheries.
 - E. Discuss how many Wildlife Management Areas are around the state.
 - F. Educate on how many Commissioners are appointed to the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.
 - G. Mention other divisions within the agency.
- IV. Educate on what a New Mexico Department of Game and Fish Officer is.
 - A. Enforce Game and Fish Rules & Regulations.
 - B. Enforce Chapter 17 Statutes with some Traffic and Criminal Statutes.
 - C. Assist with Fish and Wildlife Surveys.
 - D. Work wildlife complaints.
 - E. Work public outreach within the community.
 - F. Work Department functions around the state.
 - G. Assist regular law enforcement.
- V. Getting started
 - A. Have an interest in the outdoors.
 - B. Education starts now, focus on math, science, reading and writing.
- VI. Talk about degree requirement.

- VII. Tips from me.
 - A. Do well in school.
 - B. Get involved with wildlife club or society at school or university.
 - C. Look for volunteer and internship opportunities.
 - D. Take the time to educate yourself on wildlife & fishes of New Mexico and read Hunting and/or Fishing Rules and Information Booklets.
 - E. Don't get into trouble.
 - F. Get in shape.
 - G. Try to do a ride along.
- VIII. What you should expect once hired.
 - A. Must attend Law Enforcement Academy.
 - B. Must attend Department Recruit School.
 - C. Must complete firearms training.
 - D. Must complete training with Field Training Officer (FTO).
 - E. Must attend divisional training.
 - F. Once released from FTO and completed your training you will be placed in district.
 - G. Talk about approximates in what you can expect to be paid (this can or will change over time).
- IX. Slides of some of our officers with quotes they have about their chosen profession.
- X. Show Department video of various projects across the state. Conservation Officers have the opportunity to assist on projects like these.
- XI. Talk about importance of staying in shape and working on your 1.5-mile run, sit-ups and push-ups.
 - A. Talk to physical trainer and physician (if needed) before beginning.

- B. Work towards, and be able to get, 15 push-ups done in a minute.
 - C. Work towards, and be able to get, 27 sit-ups done in a minute.
 - D. Work towards, and be able to run, 1.5 miles in 15 minute and 54 seconds.
 - E. Try to run 300 meters under 71 seconds.
 - F. Important to stay active for at least 30 minutes a day (minimum) to stay healthy.
- XII. Look over Conservation Officer quote slides and watch Department video.
 - XIII. Thank you!
 - XIV. Look over reference material.

COURSE CONTENT:

Course Introduction and Overview

The career of a New Mexico Conservation Officer (or Game Warden) is very rewarding and filled with many adventures. No two days are quite the same for a district officer.

The goal for this presentation is to educate and give more information on the career of a Game and Fish Conservation Officer.

Instructor Notes:

Let students know that the information, although very basic, gives great insight into this career path and there is no better time than today to start working towards becoming a Conservation Officer.

Body

Mission Statement of New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

It's important to know the Mission Statement for an organization that you are interested in joining when you start your career path. The Mission Statement for the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish is to conserve, regulate, propagate and protect the wildlife and fish within the state of New Mexico using a flexible management system that ensures sustainable use for public food supply, recreation and safety; and to provide for off-highway motor vehicle recreation that recognizes cultural, historic and resource values while ensuring public safety.

Additional Information about the Department

It would be good to cover some basic information about the agency before getting into the career path of a Conservation Officer.

- The agency has one main office (Santa Fe) and four area offices (Albuquerque-NW, Raton-NE, Roswell-SE and Las Cruces-SW).
- There are six fish hatcheries around the state (Glenwood, Lisboa Springs/located near Pecos, Los Ojos, Red River, Rock Lake/located near Santa Rosa and Seven Springs/located near Jemez Springs). You can learn a little more about our fish hatcheries by visiting <http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/fishing/fish-hatcheries/>.
- Field Operations is the division Conservation Officers work under. There are 60 district officers statewide (which include 16 Corporal positions). There are also 16 Supervisory Sergeants statewide who also work in the field. Positions above the Sergeant level include 1 Lieutenant, 5 Captains, 2 Majors and 1 Colonel.
- Across the state there are properties owned or managed by, and under the control of, the State Game Commission that provide public access for hunting, fishing and wildlife-associated recreation. These properties are Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). We have 16 properties in the northwest part of the state, 12 in the northeast part of the state, 10 in the southwest part of the state and 3 in the southeast part of the state. To learn more specifics about the Wildlife Management Areas please visit <http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/conservation/state-game-commission-lands/>.
- The Commission is a seven-member citizen's body that sets hunting and fishing regulations, hires the Department of Game and Fish director, oversees spending of a more than \$35 million annual budget and sets the Department's overall direction. To learn more on the commission please visit <http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/commission/>.
- The Department also has other divisions which include Administration, Fisheries, Wildlife Management, Information and Education, Ecological and Environmental Planning, Administrative Services, Information Technology and Human Resources.

What Does a Conservation Officer do?

Talk to students about what a Conservation Officer is and does.

- Conservation officers enforce game and fish Rules & Regulations (which are passed by the Game and Fish Commission), enforce Chapter 17 (Game and Fish and Outdoor Recreation) law, some of the Traffic Law (e.g. pertaining to OHVs) and some of the Criminal Statutes (e.g. Negligent Use of a deadly weapon, Criminal Trespass).
- They get to assist with fish and wildlife surveys and projects in their districts and at times across the state. These may include spawns, surveys, traps and relocations of fish and wildlife species.
- Officers work wildlife complaints in their districts to come up with ways to alleviate wildlife and human conflicts. This may require scare tactics on species or trapping.
- They work public outreach in their communities by assisting with, or putting on, Hunter Education Classes, going to schools or organizations to give presentations and having educational booths at various events.
- Conservation Officers will also work Department events across the state such as the Outdoor Adventure Show, Youth Hunter Education Challenge (YHEC), National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) State Tournament, etc.

- They also assist regular law enforcement with investigations or projects.
- Conservation Officers around the state practice the “Conservation Officer Concept” meaning they are involved with all of the above mentioned and help to serve the public and are a great example of what community policing is.

What to expect once hired?

Getting started in the career of a Conservation Officer

- If you have an interest in hunting, fishing, trapping, camping and other outdoor activities you may find this career to be a perfect fit. Try to learn as much about all of the above as you can and advance your outdoor knowledge and skills.
- Your education should start now and really focus on math, science, reading and writing while in school. This will help to set-up a solid learning foundation and will allow you to perform at your best especially when you get into your core classes within your degree program.

What kind of Bachelor’s degree or four-year degree do I need?

Get your Bachelor’s degree in one of the following fields:

- Biology, Fisheries Science/Management, Wildlife Science/Management, Animal Science, Forestry, Forestry Management, Range Science/Management, Agricultural Science, Environmental Science, Wildlife Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice, Ecology, Natural Resource Management or Zoology.

Are there any tips to help me be more successful in being hired?

Tips from me in order to be successful:

- While in school do the best that you can to keep your grades up. When you try to hire on with most organizations they will look at your grades. If you have been a great student academically this will make you more hireable.
- Try to get involved with the wildlife club at your university, or high school, if they have one. You can learn so much more about the field of wildlife and fisheries if you do this. I would consider getting involved with 4-H, FFA and other organizations to get more experience and knowledge.
- When you’re in college, or even high school, try to find volunteer opportunities with Game and Fish, Forest Service, BLM, etc. Look for internships within wildlife and land management fields to get experience. The more work experience you can put on your resume will make you more hireable by most agencies.
- Take the time to educate yourself about wildlife and fishes of New Mexico and read the Hunting and Fishing Rules and Information Booklets. Challenge yourself to learn as much about wildlife and fishes as you possibly can.
- Don’t get into trouble and have a clean background. This is important. Live an ethical life where you follow the laws in society.
- Work at getting in shape for the physical assessment test. This is important and as long as you are doing push-ups, sit-ups, running and jogging to prepare you can increase your chances to pass the test. The current requirements are listed later in this presentation.

- Try to do a ride along or two with officers including regular law enforcement. This can help give you an idea of what the job is and it may be best to do this early on in your academic career.
- Prepare for the written entrance exam by studying the hunting and fishing rules, wildlife identification looking through a Hunter Education manual, studying about New Mexico wildlife and its lands, etc.

What kind of training will come my way once hired and how much will I get paid?

Once hired as a Conservation Officer you will have lots of training to take and pass.

- You will be required to attend the New Mexico Basic Law Enforcement Academy. This process is approximately 16 weeks long.
- Department recruit school is a fun experience and will cover many trainings to include Law Block, scenario-based trainings and learning concepts in working investigations. There are many more subjects that are covered and these are just a few.
- Recruits must complete firearms training and this is completed early on after being hired.
- One of the last steps for a recruit is to be assigned to a Field Training Officer (FTO). New Officers will work with an FTO for approximately 14 weeks (or more).
- Pay can change, but currently new hires (while in training) can expect to make around \$18.34 an hour (Pay Band 55) and once in district \$20.71 (Pay Band 60).
- More training may come your way during this time as well.

Additional slides

The presentation has four quotes (four slides) from some of our officers around the state about what the job means to them. As you can see, they love what they do!

After the quote slides there is a great Department video that shows an example of some of the projects officer may be able to assist with while in training or in district. It can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9gHiyxMdqs>.

Let's get active and get to exercising.

Make sure you are healthy enough to begin. Feel free to get advice from a physical trainer and even a physician as you begin a workout regiment. The exercises I mention are very basic and are just to give you an idea of what you will be required to pass in order to become a conservation officer. Feel free to add exercises to these basic ones and that might include weight lifting, strength training and even yoga.

Stretch out first and then jog in place for about a minute or two to warm up.

How many push-ups can you do in a minute? Can you do 15 in under a minute?

How many sit-ups can you do in a minute? Can you do 27 in under a minute?

If you are able to take a hike or jog, get some fresh air while getting some exercise, do some jumping jacks or jog in place for some cardio. Your goal should be to run 1.5 miles in under 15 minutes and 54 seconds. Also, try to run 300 meters in under 71 seconds.

If you could not reach the minimums don't worry and keep working hard. Try to increase the amount you do a little at a time. Try to stay active for at least 30 minutes a day and let's get ready to pass our entrance physical assessment test to become a Conservation Officer.

Conclusion Summary

Good Luck! And I wish each of you the best! A career as a Conservation Officer is very rewarding and fun. You can have a positive impact on our wildlife and fish populations for the citizens of New Mexico.