Carl Heilman II

On Patrol

Real stories from Conservation Officers and Forest Rangers in the field

Contributed by ECO Lt. Tom Caifa and Forest Ranger Lt. John Solan

Don't Eyeball the ECO—St. Lawrence County

On a routine patrol in December, ECO Bret Canary found himself in suspicious circumstances in the town of Pierrepont. When he drove by a hunting camp, a few men were standing outside and watched ECO Canary very carefully as he passed. Canary felt something wasn't right and decided to turn around. As he did, he noticed fresh drag marks and blood leading out of a nearby trail head. Sure enough, the marks led to the camp Canary just passed. The particular area happens to be closed to hunting and when the ECO pulled into the driveway, he saw the men had moved inside. Canary went to the front door and, looking through the glass, saw two of the hunters feverishly filling out tags. Eventually, the hunters showed the ECO three deer hanging behind the camp. Only one was tagged and its hunter was not there. The hunters admitted that a total of six deer were taken in the area and those missing were in a pick-up truck on its way to Saranac Lake. Canary contacted ECO John Blades, and he quickly intercepted the truck on its way. Turns out, five of the six deer taken by the hunters were illegal. The three deer at the camp were taken in a prohibited area and not tagged properly, and two of the three deer ECO Blades intercepted were illegally tagged. The hunters were charged with hunting violations and the deer were donated to local people in need.

Monkey Business—Nassau County

Recently, Long Island DEC law enforcement officers got a tip from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service special agents that a pet store was illegally selling monkeys to the public. ECO Matthew Garrigan met at the store with two agents. They told Garrigan they had gone into the store undercover and saw three monkeys were being offered for sale with a combined price of nearly $20,000 dollars, constituting a potential felony. The sale of monkeys as pets is carefully regulated for good reason; they can be very aggressive and sometimes carry communicable diseases. Garrigan interviewed store employees, gathered evidence, and made arrangements with the Bronx Zoo and a local veterinarian to hold the monkeys while the criminal investigation took place. Environmental Conservation Investigators worked to get the cooperation of the corporation responsible and it ended up paying a $6,000 administrative penalty for possessing, importing, and offering monkeys for sale without a permit.

"Snow" in Brooklyn—Kings County

Recently, ECO Jennifer Okonuk received a complaint regarding a Brooklyn-based cement facility, Northstar Ready Mix Corporation. Apparently, the company's workers over-filled their silo, which caused blow off from the top. The result was a whitish-grey dust cloud that surrounded the facility and spread a snowfall-like coating over a two-block radius. The material even wafted into the local subway stations and was a public nuisance to everyone. ECO Okonuk spoke with the company's manager about the situation and he explained what happened. He was ordered to immediately send employees out to clean up the surrounding area, and ECO Okonuk issued the company two summonses for air contamination violations.

Ask the Ranger

Q: How does my snowmobile registration have to be displayed?

A: Resident and non-resident owners of snowmobiles operated in New York should carry a copy of their snowmobile registration and insurance with them at all times when riding. The registration sticker provided by the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles must be displayed on the snowmobile cowling, with the current validation sticker properly affixed. Snowmobiles first registered before 1995 may not have this sticker and must display their registration number on the cowling in three-inch block letters that read left to right, begin with the letters NY, and are both reflective and in a contrasting color to the cowling. Non-resident owners of snowmobiles operated in New York State need only display the New York validation sticker, if the snowmobile is properly registered in another state and that registration is displayed appropriately.