



On Patrol

Carl Heilman II

*Real stories from Conservation Officers
and Forest Rangers in the field*

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

Something's Fishy—Kings County

On New Year's Eve, ECOs in Brooklyn initiated a major case against NK Seafood Group, a company with no commercial permits to sell seafood in New York and a long history of violations. After a lengthy investigation, ECOs located a warehouse of seafood about to be sold illegally by the company. More than 9,000 pounds of seafood, including live lobsters, blackfish, Dungeness crabs and clams were seized and inventoried. Lt. John Fitzpatrick arranged for a large portion of the seafood to be donated to the Bowery Mission in lower Manhattan. Later that month, NK Seafood Group was once again caught illegally importing a large number of marine species, which the US Fish and Wildlife Service impounded at a warehouse at JFK Airport. ECOs confiscated and donated the 5,000 pounds of seafood to the Open Door Church in Brooklyn. Charges against NK Seafood Group are pending.

Taking out the Trash—Onondaga County

In December, a landowner contacted ECO Rick Head about an unusual illegal dumping complaint in Otisco. The landowner was hunting when he saw a pick-up truck pull to the side of the road and the driver unload a pile of garbage. The landowner ran up to confront the driver, but the man drove away. When the landowner looked at the pile of garbage, he was surprised to find a gun case containing a very nice 30-06 rifle. The dumper must have realized his mistake because he came back to retrieve the firearm a short time later, but the landowner refused to give it to him and instead turned it over to ECO Head. The officer checked the firearm and discovered it was loaded. The dumper was charged with unlawful disposal of solid waste and possession of a loaded firearm in a motor vehicle.

Don't Wander—Herkimer County

In October, Mr. Wesley Rennie of Pompey and his friend, Rick Morton, were doing their annual hike to Rondaxe Fire Tower. On the return trip, they decided to try and find the original trail to Rondaxe Fire Tower that started from Route 28. Unfortunately, Mr. Rennie got too close to the edge and

slipped, sliding more than 100 feet down a steep portion of the mountain. On the way down, he crashed into several trees, injuring his shoulder, arm and lower back. Herkimer County 911 was called and rescuers reached him at about 2 p.m. The rescuers stabilized Rennie, cut a trail to Route 28, and then carried him to a waiting ambulance. Mr. Rennie was transported to Old Forge airport, and then airlifted to Syracuse.

Load of Quack—Suffolk County

During a routine foot patrol along a marshy area in East Hampton, ECO Liza Bobseine discovered a large amount of corn scattered along the shoreline and in the water near a hunter's duck blind. Suspicious that someone was illegally using bait to lure ducks, she returned the next day (the opening day of duck season) and watched two duck hunters. Soon, one of the hunters shot at some ducks as they flew overland past a nearby house, striking the house with several pellets. ECO Bobseine arrested the individuals for discharging a firearm within 500 feet of a residence, and for hunting waterfowl with the aid of bait.

Ask the ECO

Q: I know it's after the season, but the "Ask the ECO" section of your December 2009 issue got me thinking. You said it was OK for someone to track a wounded deer after dark with a light, as long as they don't carry a firearm or longbow. What if you have a New York State permit to carry a concealed weapon?

A: If it is after dark, you may track a wounded deer with the aid of a light, but you may not possess a firearm of any kind while doing so—regardless of a permit. We allow people to track wounded deer after dark because it is the ethical thing to do. However, we cannot allow the possession of a firearm while doing so because it would undermine our capability to enforce the law.