

# On Patrol

Real stories from Conservation Officers and Forest Rangers in the field



DEC photo

## Fur Coats Seized—New York County

At the Hell's Kitchen Flea Market, you can find almost anything: rare records, vintage furniture, even endangered species, or at least their fur. ECO Dustin Dainack was patrolling the flea market when he discovered a vendor selling a fur coat that looked suspiciously like cheetah, an endangered species. The seller claimed the fur wasn't from a cheetah but rather from another (nonexistent) species. The ECO seized the coat and another fur coat from a nearby vendor. The second seller admitted his coat was from an ocelot, another endangered species. ECO Dainack took both coats to Patrick Thomas, PhD, vice president and general curator of the Bronx Zoo, for examination. Thomas concluded that the first coat was a cheetah and the other coat was a Geoffroy's cat, an uncommon species. Charges are pending.

## Fishy Waders—Suffolk County

At Montauk Point late one afternoon, ECO Liza Bobseine walked along the footpaths leading to the rocky shores. She watched a fisherman, who appeared reasonably fit, having difficulty making his way up an incline. He seemed particularly hampered by his bulky-looking chest waders. Closer inspection revealed the man had tucked a striped bass into each leg of his waders. ECO Bobseine issued a summons to the man for possessing more than his limit of striped bass.

## Illegal Wildlife on Craigslist—Queens County

While searching Craigslist for wildlife for sale, ECO Shea Mathis noticed an ad for red belly piranha, which are illegal to possess in the state without a DEC permit. Posing as a potential buyer, ECO Mathis contacted the seller, who said he had an alligator for sale as

Carl Heilman II

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

well—also illegal to possess without a DEC permit. Mathis met with the seller, and after visually confirming the seller had the animals, called-in uniformed ECO Chris Lattimer who was waiting nearby. Together they seized five piranhas and a foot-long alligator, and issued a summons to the perpetrator.

## Parties Busted—St. Lawrence County

Ranger Jay Terry received a tip about a large, underage alcohol and drug party planned for Brasher State Forest. After verifying the information, he requested assistance from the State Police. On the night of the party, several DEC rangers and two troopers arrived at the site. Despite the rain which caused the turnout to be smaller than expected, rangers and troopers still issued 30 tickets, and delivered two minors to their parents and had one vehicle towed. Charges included: felony DWI; unlawful possession of marijuana; open containers in a motor vehicle; littering; felony drug/cocaine possession; underage alcohol possession; unattended fire; illegal operation of a motor vehicle; and providing a false name.

## ASK THE ECO

**Q:** Can I sign my buck tag over to another person if they do not have a tag?

**A:** No. The only carcass tag that may be signed over to another hunter is a deer management permit (DMP) tag for an antlerless deer. Instructions for how to transfer a DMP carcass tag to another person can be found in your hunting guide.