

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

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Taboo to Shoot a Moose—Essex County

In October 2008, ECO John Blades and Investigator Ken Bruno were alerted to a hidden moose carcass in the town of Keene. Forest Ranger Charles Platt had provided tips he received from concerned citizens, so ECO Blades and ECI Bruno were called. After a brief investigation, they charged two previously convicted felons with illegally killing a moose. According to ECOs, one of them shot the moose, and the other assisted with butchering and transporting the hind-quarters. Today's moose population in New York State numbers only in the hundreds. Killing one is a misdemeanor offense with a possible penalty of up to \$2,000 in fines, and up to one year imprisonment. One defendant pleaded guilty in December and was fined \$1,000. The other originally pleaded not guilty to the same charge, but changed his mind when offered a deal with the district attorney. In lieu of a trial, he agreed to enter a guilty plea, pay the maximum fine of \$2,000, and spend 30 days in jail.

though, only four of them came back. Ranger Evans arrived at the scene, conducted interviews and organized a search. Searchers located a copy of the hikers' planned route, and so had a pretty good idea where the lost individuals might be. Taking a local resident to assist him, Ranger Evans followed a compass bearing up the mountain. They called out to the missing hikers as they climbed and near the top they heard faint cries. A couple of signal shots from Ranger Evans elicited a chorus of shouts for help. The three missing friends were found huddled around a small fire they had built when they wandered off the trail in the dark. After everyone had rested and had a quick snack for energy, the group was escorted off the mountain and back to their camp. Everyone was a little cold, tired and sore, but otherwise unharmed.

Rabid Fox Bites Youth—Livingston County

In March, ECO Brian Wade responded to a call that a teenager was bitten on the leg by a fox. After making sure that the youth was sent to the hospital, ECO Wade attempted to track down the fox, knowing that finding out what was wrong with it would help doctors decide on the proper treatment. ECO Wade found the fox in a nearby brush pile, clearly suffering from some sort of disease. Noticing the approaching officer, the fox charged out of the brush and tried to bite him. The fox was euthanized and submitted to the Livingston County Health Department. Testing proved the fox was suffering from rabies, and as a result, the teenager received proper medical treatment for the bite.

Ask the ECO

Q: Do I have to carry my hunting, fishing or trapping license while engaged in these activities?

A: Yes, you must have your license on your person while exercising any privilege of that license. You are also required to exhibit the license on demand to any police officer, peace officer or owner, lessee, or person in control of the lands or waters on which you are present.

So, take a few extra moments to make sure you have your license and all appropriate tags before you leave home, and then enjoy your time afield.

At Least the View Was Nice—Herkimer County

One frosty evening in early October 2008, Forest Ranger Luke Evans received a call at the Stillwater Reservoir Ranger Headquarters. Seven friends left remote community Beaver River Station to hike up Burnt Mountain in the Independence River Wild Forest to appreciate the view and fall foliage. At the end of the day,



ECO John Blades with the moose carcass perpetrators tried to hide.