



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

Through the Ice— Saratoga County

In March, New York State Police Trooper Vanderpool contacted ECO Robert Higgins about snowmobiles that possibly went through the ice near the Conklingville Dam on Great Sacandaga Lake. The ECO and trooper discovered three sets of snowmobile tracks in the area; two tracks ended in the open water near the dam and one set made it to the other side. There was an abandoned snowmobile in the vicinity which the two officers discovered was owned by a local female. It was neither registered nor insured. ECO Higgins and Trooper Vanderpool interviewed the woman and she admitted to snowmobiling with her husband and two friends the previous Saturday night. When her machine broke down, she rode with her husband. They and a friend went through the ice on their snowmobiles; the fourth member of their party made it across. Luckily they all made it out alive. ECO Higgins issued her tickets for various violations. The investigation will continue until both machines are recovered from the bottom of the lake. Law requires that any vehicles, ATVs or snowmobiles that fall through ice be removed to minimize negative environmental impacts.

To Catch a Suspect— Jefferson County

Recently, federal game wardens on the Fort Drum Army Base contacted ECO John Murphy about a deer that might have been illegally taken on the

property. It seemed to be the same one that was regularly seen in an area closed to hunting. Federal wardens found a blood trail leading from a gut pile to a nearby parking lot. They had a suspect in mind and interviewed the man the following day; he admitted to taking the deer but insisted he did so in an area open to hunting. Wardens called ECO John Murphy for assistance, and after persistent investigation he located a portion of packaged meat from the deer. The officer sent the meat and a portion of the gut pile to DEC's Delmar Lab for DNA testing. A few weeks later, the result was a positive genetic match. ECO Murphy charged the man with illegally taking a deer, discharging a firearm in a restricted area, and trespassing. He faces heavy fines and possible termination from his job on the base.

Alligator Bust—Suffolk County

Earlier this year, ECOs Erik Dalecki and Matt Krug assisted the Suffolk County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals with an undercover purchase of an alligator. A subject from Syosset, New York was trying to sell his alligator. The buy and bust went successfully; ECOs seized the alligator and issued the suspect summonses for possession of the alligator without a permit.

Haste Hurts—Hamilton County

Recently, Forest Rangers John Ploss and Ian Kerr arrived at the Perkins Clearing Easement Trail to help a young

man who crashed his snowmobile. He was traveling along the trail at speeds too fast for conditions when he struck a tree and was ejected from the machine. He suffered severe leg lacerations and also complained of back pain when forest rangers arrived on scene. When Rangers Ploss and Kerr arrived, the subject was back-boarded and transported six miles to a waiting ambulance where he was taken to Nathan Littauer Hospital in Gloversville.

ASK THE ECO

Q: I heard that the saltwater fishing license requirement was repealed. Is there anything else I need to do in order to legally fish in the marine and coastal district of New York State?

A: Yes. You must register with the Recreational Marine Fishing Registry if you are 16 years of age or older and wish to fish in the marine and coastal district of NYS. You must also register if you are fishing for migratory fish from the sea (such as striped bass) in certain tributaries where they may be found (such as the Hudson River). You can register by telephone using DEC's automated license system (DECALS) at 1-86-NY-DECALS. The registry runs on a calendar year basis from January 1 through December 31 of each year. There is no charge for registering. For more information, go to www.dec.ny.gov/permits/54950.html