

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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Lucky Dolphin—Richmond County

In early May, the Riverhead Foundation contacted ECOs Gregory Maneeley and Matthew Krug with information that an injured dolphin



had stranded on the shore of Staten Island. After a short search of Ocean Breeze Pier, the ECOs found the injured dolphin in the rocks alongside a bulkhead. The officers contacted the Riverhead Foundation and requested the foundation commence a rescue operation. ECOs Maneeley and Krug secured the area and kept onlookers



away so the dolphin wouldn't become agitated and further injure itself. The ECOs assisted the foundation's staff in loading the dolphin onto a stretcher and carrying it across the beach. There, it was secured in a truck and transported to the Riverhead Foundation for treatment. The dolphin made a full recovery and was released into the ocean a few days later.

Runaway Boat—Nassau County

ECOs Erik Dalecki and Christopher Lagree were on boat patrol at the Jones Beach Air Show near Zach's Bay when they were informed that two elderly men had fallen out of their boat. To make matters worse, the people still onboard were unable to operate the vessel, which had begun to crash into other boats anchored in the bay. The ECOs quickly responded and rescued the two elderly men as they struggled to stay afloat. The officers then located the runaway vessel and Dalecki pulled alongside it while Lagree jumped in and got it under control. Amazingly, no one was seriously injured and the two elderly men were safely returned to their boat and sent on their way.

Loose Lips—Genesee County

Recently, a caller contacted ECO Brian Wade asking when people could start fishing on opening day. Wade advised the caller he could start fishing immediately after midnight on April 1st, which was that night. The caller then provided a tip that on opening day several people take more than the limit of trout at a small stocked stream. Wade

contacted the local ECO, Richard Rauscher, and that night the two ECOs patrolled the location in question. There, the officers watched several men fishing before midnight, and noticed one subject leave in a truck and return minutes later. When the ECOs confronted the party, the men told conflicting stories about their fish take. A ten-year-old boy indicated one man went home with several trout and returned. The man confessed when the officers revealed they saw him. ECO Wade recognized the man's voice and the man admitted he was the tipster who had called earlier. The man said he never thought the officers would be out at night when they had to be up for opening day. In all, four people were charged with taking more than the limit of trout and fishing for trout out of season.

Cooperative Rescue—Warren County

On April 15, Chestertown State Police contacted ECOs, looking for K-9 assistance in locating a missing 97-year-old man. ECO delaRosa notified Ray Brook dispatch of the request and asked forest rangers to assist. The ECO and Rangers Ovitt and Kabrehl responded to Rte. 9 where the subject was last seen, a mile or so from his residence. Ranger Ovitt located a fresh track in the sand along the shoulder of the road. At several points, the track changed direction, as if the person was wandering without purpose. Eventually Ranger Ovitt followed the track up an old logging road, but was unable to follow it across the grass and moss. ECO delaRosa's K-9 then took over and located the subject at approximately 3:45 a.m. The elderly man was barely responsive and not adequately dressed for the weather. He was evacuated from the woods and transported to Glens Falls Hospital.

ASK THE ECO

Q: Is a license now required to fish in New York's marine waters?

A: Yes. As of October 1, 2009, all anglers 16 years of age or older who wish to fish in the marine and coastal district, or in other state waters for "migratory fish from the sea" (striped bass, American shad, eels, blueback herring, alewife, etc.), must have a recreational marine fishing license. The marine and coastal district includes all waters of the Atlantic Ocean within three nautical miles of the coast, as well as all tidal waters within the state, including parts of the Hudson River. For more information on the new marine fishing license, visit www.dec.ny.gov/permits/54950.html.