

On Patrol

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

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Contributed by ECO Lt. Tom Caifa
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“Dumbsters” Choose Wrong Place— Oswego County

ECOs Shawn Dussault, William Burnell and Matt Dorrett investigated a situation involving two couches, a recliner and assorted trash that had been dumped onto ECO Dorrett’s property. As they searched through the furniture and trash, they found a cell phone that had fallen deep inside one of the couches. The battery was dead, so they went to the nearest AT&T store a few miles away. With the help of store employees, they were able to retrieve a few names and numbers from the phone. One number was for a woman who lived a short distance from ECO Dorrett, so the officers drove to her house. After a brief interview, two family members confessed to dumping the furniture and trash. When they learned whose property they had dumped it on, the look on their faces would have given them away even if they hadn’t confessed. The men were ticketed for unlawful disposal of solid waste and ordered to clean up the mess.

Lost Hikers—Essex County

On a spring day, five visitors from Florida left a Schroon Lake inn at 10 a.m. and traveled to the Upper Works Trailhead to hike into the High Peaks. When they had not returned by 11 p.m., staff at the inn called Essex County 911. As two forest rangers prepared to search for the hikers, a State Police officer reported having found their vehicle in the trailhead parking lot. The rangers searched area trails throughout the rainy night to no avail. The next morning, six additional rangers joined the search; two entered the High Peaks Wilderness from the north. At 10:05 a.m., they found the group near Calamity Brook. The hikers were wet and cold but otherwise healthy. After rehydrating and warming them, the forest rangers escorted the group back to their vehicle. (Note: Know your abilities and the area you plan to hike. Always carry a map and compass, and know how to use them. In addition, carry a flashlight or headlamp at all times.)



Dangerous “Pet”—Kings County

Lt. Matthew Lochner and ECO Matthew Baker responded to a call from the New York City Police Department about an unusual and potentially dangerous pet. NYPD officers had been serving an arrest warrant in Brooklyn, when one of them climbed onto a back porch and heard hissing. He thought the sound was coming from an air conditioner until he saw a five-foot alligator (larger than the one pictured above) just below his feet. ECOs removed the “pet” and issued a ticket to its owner for unlawful possession of a regulated species.

ASK the ECO

Q: I have seen anglers use a setup called an “umbrella” or “Alabama” rig. I was wondering whether these setups are legal to fish in New York. Is there a hook limit on a single line?

A: In New York State, there is a limit to the number of hook points and baits/lures that can be used per line. In general, umbrella and Alabama rigs are legal as long as they have a maximum total of 15 hook points (in any combination) and there are no more than 5 baits or lures (with hooks) per line. There is no limit to the number of lures, flashers, spinners or other devices used to attract fish as long as they do not have hooks attached. This regulation can be found in the *New York State Fishing Regulations Guide* under the definition of “angling.”