

On Patrol

Real stories from Conservation Officers and Forest Rangers in the field

Carl Heilman II

Contributed by ECO Lt. Tom Caifa and Forest Ranger Capt. Stephen Scherry



Montana game wardens with ECOs Chrisman Starczek and Rick Head

Elk? Poachers in New York— Onondaga County and Montana

Recently, Montana Game Wardens Lennie Buhman and Todd Anderson contacted Environmental Conservation Investigator (ECI) Jim Boylan regarding an elk illegally taken in Montana and brought back to New York. ECI Boylan, ECOs Richard Head, Scott Yacavone and Chrisman Starczek, and the game wardens interviewed the three men who had taken the bull elk. The men had previously hunted elk together in Montana, but this time purchased only one elk tag to share. Two of the men also purchased less expensive antelope tags in case they were checked. One man admitted to shooting the bull elk and using his friend's tag. Because all three men transported the elk and processed it at their camp, they were issued appearance tickets returnable in Montana, and the elk's rack was seized. Charges included: killing an elk without a tag, unlawful possession and transportation of an elk, and unlawful transfer of an elk tag. The men paid a total of \$4,200 in fines, and the shooter's hunting, fishing and trapping privileges were revoked in Montana and New York for two years.

Bald Eagle Rescue— Chenango County

Recently, ECOs Eric Templeton and Andy McCormick responded to a report of an injured bald eagle in the Town of Afton. When ECO Templeton arrived, a witness stated the bald eagle was in a field behind his residence and seemed unable to fly. Smaller birds had been dive-bombing the eagle, driving it into taller grass along the field's edge. Templeton and ECO McCormick, along with Tom Gragg, a DEC employee, swept the tall grass until they located the eagle. McCormick then subdued the eagle with a heavy blanket while Templeton secured its legs. They trans-



DEC photo

ported the eagle to the Cornell University Wildlife Clinic for examination where several superficial wounds were found on the eagle's wings; fortunately, there were no fractures. After a short recovery period, the eagle will be released back into the wild.

Illegal Party Cut Short— Ulster County

While patrolling Kenneth L. Wilson Campground, Forest Ranger Marie Ellenbogen came upon a group of 24 young campers, only one of which was old enough to possess alcoholic beverages. Ranger Ellenbogen told her to keep such beverages in her vehicle, and that Lieutenant Stephen Scherry would be patrolling later that night. When Lt. Scherry reached the campsite, two intoxicated young women staggered in his direction. After identifying himself, he summoned all campers together and had them place the alcoholic beverages in front of their campsite. In all, there were 152 unopened cans of beer and two bottles of vodka. The forest ranger asked for photo IDs and questioned everyone. Lt. Scherry could not prove the 21-year-old provided the alcohol, but he emphasized the seriousness of such an offense. Nine underage campers who drank were fined \$125 each. Before the group left the next morning, the 21-year-old wanted the confiscated beverages returned; her request was denied.

ASK THE ECO

Q: May I cross private property to gain access to a stream stocked by the state?

A: No, not without first obtaining permission from the landowner.