

Big Headache

My friend John Brush, an avid birdwatcher and general wildlife enthusiast, found a full set of deer bones, including this skull, just off a road in Suffolk County's Southold Town. It wasn't until later



that he noticed the broadhead stuck in the skull. It appears a bowhunter's arrow had lodged above the eye socket of this mature deer. Notice

the healing growth around the wound site and the misshapen antler—clues that the deer survived for at least a year after the injury. Unfortunately, the deer wasn't so lucky in what we believe to be a later encounter with an automobile. Southold Town has some of the greatest deer densities in the state, and car strikes are common. The town is working with DEC to reduce deer numbers by increasing access to town properties for hunting and encouraging use of DEC's Deer Management Assistance permits.

Nonetheless, it is disappointing to see this type of wound. The broadhead clearly tells of a frontal impact. This is a terrible shot; certainly a mistake. Perhaps this deer wandered under the tree stand of an inexperienced hunter, who underestimated the difficulty of this kind of shot. Or maybe the deer turned his head suddenly and received the unintended strike.

However it played out, time spent afield offers opportunities to see and discover new things. My friend and I get out there every chance we get. You never know what you'll find.

Jack Becht
Southold, Suffolk County

Thanks for sharing a fascinating find—and an important message about hunting ethics—with our readers.

—David Nelson, Editor

Happy Ending

I thought your readers would enjoy this photo of a barred owl. The owl was discovered entangled in barbed wire and then taken to Ravensbeard, a rehabilitation center for injured wildlife located in Ulster County. After months of care, it was deemed ready for release, and transported to Knightower in West Hurley. Upon being placed on the railing, it flew away, much to the delight of an awe-struck audience.

Barry Knight
Hurley, Ulster County

What a great photo of a happy occasion. Each year, injured or orphaned wildlife like this owl are cared for by dedicated wildlife rehabilitators across the state. Licensed by DEC, these volunteers have the experience, expertise and facilities to successfully treat wild animals, and then hopefully release them back into the wild, where they belong. You were very fortunate to be part of this owl's successful release. Thanks for sharing.

—Eileen Stegemann, Assistant Editor



(Note: check out www.dec.ny.gov/animals/261.html for more information about sick and injured wildlife.)

Cat Family Portrait

These trail camera photos were captured by Richard Sills along Steuben County Route 119—the river road from Addison to Hornell.

R. Spencer & Janie L. Ferguson
Cameron Mills, Steuben County

Wow—awesome shots! Your friend photographed a family of bobcats, which is rarely seen. Just as important, though, is the difference in appearance of the adult female in the two shots. Take a good look—in the close-up shot, she is very clearly a bobcat. But in the other shot,



the bobcat's shape and posture look a bit like a mountain lion, except of course for the bobbed tail. We don't have wild mountain lions in New York, but thanks to your friend's photos, our readers can see how people might mistake a bobcat for a mountain lion!

—David Nelson, Editor

Schoolyard Surprise

The students at the Orleans/Niagara BOCES Meadow School in North Tonawanda were recently surprised with a visit from an eight-point buck. The deer spent the morning on the playground, allowing lots of time for all the students to look and learn.

Diane Schena
Lockport

Not many people have the pleasure of seeing such a nice buck so closely or for so long, so those students were quite lucky. Thanks for sending the photos and sharing your story. Nature is all around us and it's always nice to hear when it presents valuable learning opportunities to our youth.

—Jenna Kerwin, Staff Writer



Ask the Biologist

Q: Why does DEC prohibit the use of baitfish in many ponds in the Adirondacks? I regularly fish ponds for brook trout and sometimes the fish are pretty skinny. Wouldn't it help to introduce some minnows for them to eat?

A: Brook trout have evolved in the numerous, small, isolated ponds and lakes in the Adirondacks with few competing fish species. Although larger brookies will on occasion consume other fish and aquatic animals, for the most part they eat aquatic insects and invertebrates. When other fish species are added to a brook trout water, they compete directly with brookies for food, and may even eat their eggs and fry. In the Adirondacks, brook trout have been pushed out of much of their original range due to the introduction of competitive fish species, most likely via a bait bucket.

DEC regularly monitors brook trout pond populations and adjusts stocking rates and/or regulations as necessary, to ensure optimal growth and survival. Keeping brook trout populations in balance with their preferred non-fish food supply is the only way to improve their condition. Adding minnows for them to eat will do nothing to improve their condition, but instead will likely destroy the brook trout population in the pond.

—Ed Woltmann, DEC Fisheries Biologist



Write to us

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