



Unique Visitor

This saw-whet owl found its way into our house and flew around until we cornered it in an upstairs bedroom. We opened all of the windows and waited. No luck. Finally, remembering the saw-whet's reputation for "tameness," my wife held out her hand. It calmly perched on her hand and allowed itself to be carried to a window and freedom.

Robert Kuehl
Rochester, Monroe County

Its sounds like everyone involved had quite an experience! Small owls, saw-whets are named after one of their calls that sounds similar to a saw being sharpened. They are known for being quite tame, but as with all wildlife, people should remember to keep their distance.

—Conservationist staff

Proud Pups

Here is a picture of my German shorthaired pointer Jaeger at Alder Bottom Wildlife Management Area in Clymer. I have hunted Alder Bottom for more than 15 years. These cock pheasants were some of the many released by DEC.

Daren Smith
Derby, Erie County



I am a falconer. I thought I would share this photo of my red-tailed hawk Emmy and my standard poodle Bullet on a rabbit hunt. I have been trying to get them to work together. Emmy has become very tolerant of Bullet, but Bullet is still very excited when she gets something.

Chris Paparo
Suffolk County



Sometimes hunting with a "buddy" can be quite rewarding! Though not common, falconers do use dogs from time to time. For instance, falconers might use mini-dachshunds and Jack Russell terriers to move rabbits out of cover; beagles to keep pressure on running rabbits; or pointers to locate feathered quarry. Both the raptor and canine instinctively know their roles in a hunt, it's just a matter of getting each party to recognize each other as a member of the same team. It takes some time and patience, but it can work.

—Billy Deckert and Jim Webber, current and former presidents (respectively) of NYS Falconry Association

Fish Food

I took these photos of a water snake eating a white perch on the shore of the Hudson River in Poughkeepsie. That's what's so great about going to the river; you always see something special!

Michael Luke
Poughkeepsie,
Dutchess County



Thanks for sharing your great photos! In the world of snakes, water snakes have high metabolisms, so that fish will probably be digested in a matter of days, if not sooner. As a lot of energy was used in swallowing the fish, this water snake will most likely stop to rest close by. It might bask on a rock to raise its body temperature to start the digestion process, as well, and then move on to a more secure location.

—William Hoffman, DEC Fish and Wildlife Technician



Autumn Eagle

Here is a bald eagle in Cornwall that appears to be admiring the beautiful fall colors.

Maureen Moore
Orange County

It certainly makes us want to get outside! For a list of places you can go to enjoy New York's fall foliage, check out "Colors of Fall: Leaf Peeping at Prospect Mountain" in the October 2010 Conservationist.

—Conservationist staff

Close Cousins

I was fishing for trout at West Lake and caught what I believe is a grass pickerel. I took a picture because I've never seen one here, and it is not listed on DEC's website as a species of fish for this lake. Can you confirm what species it is?

Chris Ceresko
Long Island

You're close! You actually caught a redfin pickerel. Both redfin and grass pickerels are subspecies of the same species. Ice Age glaciers pushed the species south and as the glaciers receded the fish came back north on either side of the Appalachian Mountains, dividing into two subspecies. Redfins are found east of the



Appalachians, while grass pickerel occur in the Great Lakes and Mississippi drainages. On Long Island, redfin pickerel are not uncommon in south shore streams and ponds. DEC regulations do not distinguish between species of pickerel, so the size limit is the same as chain pickerel, which is 15 inches.

—Chart Guthrie, DEC Regional Fisheries Manager,
Stony Brook

Family Tradition

I took this photo of my son Christopher with my dad Lewis (a.k.a. "Pa"). Christopher has been asking to go hunting, and Pa (a former NYS Hunter Safety Instructor) was itching to take him. This was Christopher's first time hunting and, as he and Pa were walking in front of me, I couldn't help capture the moment. It illustrates how Pa is teaching Christopher all the aspects of safe and successful hunting.

Jim Wargo
Erie County



We're pleased to hear Christopher is learning safe and happy hunting habits from a great teacher.

—Conservationist staff



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