

On Patrol

Carl Heilman II

Real stories from Conservation Officers and Forest Rangers in the field

Contributed by ECO Lt. Tom Caifa and Forest Ranger Lt. John Solan

Smash and Grabbers Grabbed—Greene County

Forest Ranger Christine Nelson, ECO Sean Dewey, the Hunter Police Department and the New York State Police were working a detail to catch “smash-and-grab” perpetrators who would smash windows of parked cars and grab things from inside. Numerous such break-ins had occurred in the Town of Hunter. Ranger Nelson was patrolling the Dog Hole Parking Lot when she noticed two subjects looking in vehicle windows. When people passed by, however, the subjects left the area. Later that day, while on their way to court, Ranger Nelson and ECO Dewey saw the subjects again, this time at the Molly Smith Parking Lot. As ECO Dewey continued to court, Ranger Nelson joined Police Officer Ryan Schrader, who dropped her off to circle back to the lot. Seeing the subjects drive past and spotting a vehicle in the lot with a broken window, Nelson notified Schrader, who found and arrested the subjects after they admitted to robbing the vehicle. One subject was charged with multiple offenses and remanded to the Greene County Jail; the other subject was charged with one offense and then released.

Boating While Intoxicated—Monroe County

While on boat patrol in Irondequoit Bay, Lt. Thomas Stoner and ECOs Bruce Hummel and Paul Blanton were startled by a 35-foot cabin cruiser speeding past within 15 feet of their vessel. It was so close that the ensuing wake washed over the side of the patrol boat. After a short pursuit, ECO Hummel boarded the cruiser and spoke with the driver. The driver’s breath reeked of alcohol, and his eyes were bloodshot and watery. After a few simple questions, the officers transported the driver to shore and administered a chemical breath test. He had a blood alcohol content of .15 percent—well above the legal limit of .08 percent—and he was issued appearance tickets for reckless operation of a vessel and boating while intoxicated.



young monitor lizard

Leapin’ Lizards!—Orange County

ECO Nick Desotelle responded to a request for assistance from NY Park Police at Knox’s Headquarters in the Town of New Windsor. The park manager had found a three-foot-long lizard on park property and showed Officer Desotelle where it had climbed into the cracks of an old stone wall. After removing a few rocks, ECO Desotelle found himself face to face with a large Savannah monitor lizard, a native of Africa that is sold in the U.S. as an exotic pet. With assistance from park officers, he forced the reptile into a large metal cage for transport to the Bear Mountain Zoo. The identity of the person who released the lizard remains unknown.

ASK the ECO

Q: I lost my hunting license and carcass tags while afield. They were in my back tag holder, pinned to my jacket and must have gotten caught on a branch as I moved through scrub brush. Can I purchase another license?

A: You can’t legally purchase a second hunting license, but you can purchase a duplicate of your lost license and tags at any license-issuing outlet. Replacement of a license costs \$5.00, but replacement of each set of tags costs an additional \$10. A replacement back tag is free. We recommend putting only the back tag on your back and carrying your license and carcass tags in a secure interior pocket. A significant number of these are lost each year when carried in the back tag holder.