



# On Patrol

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

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## Snagging in the Rain—Oswego County

On a rainy day in late October, ECOs William Burnell and Matt Dorrett conducted a foot patrol of a popular fishing area along the Salmon River in the town of Albion. Since it had been raining for most of the day, the officers weren't confident that the foot patrol would pay off. After a lengthy walk, the officers came upon several fishermen at a bend in the river. With binoculars, the officers determined that two of the men had weighted treble hooks attached to the end of their line and were attempting to snag salmon. After a short interview, the men admitted to the officers that they were trying to snag fish. The officers also found a small tackle box with a dozen more weighted treble hooks inside. These are illegal to use or even possess on the Salmon River. When asked why they were using illegal hooks in broad daylight, the anglers' responded, "We didn't think you guys worked in the rain!" The men were charged with several violations including attempting to take fish by snatching, possessing snatch hooks and possessing marijuana.

## Wintry Rescue—Saratoga County

Forest Rangers Suzanne Heare, Mike Bodnar and Werner Schwab were conducting a snowmobile compliance checkpoint at a trail intersection near the Wilcox Lake Wild Forest. The rangers had already issued five tickets for various violations and checked approximately 100 snowmobiles when they were alerted to a possible snowmobile accident about one mile away. The rangers responded and encountered a snowmobile on its side in the trail, and the injured operator. The rangers radioed local EMS responders and requested to meet them at the trail system parking lot. They treated the injured subject and used a local club's trail groomer to transport the patient to awaiting EMS providers. The victim was reportedly treated for minor injuries and released from a local hospital the same day. Through witness interviews, ranger investigation revealed the ski on the injured party's snowmobile hooked some low hanging brush on the edge of the trail, causing it to flip. Luckily no one else was injured and the operator was not seriously hurt.

## Long Arm of the Law—Hamilton and Nassau Counties

In November, ECO Keith Kelly responded to a deer-jacking complaint in the town of Long Lake. The complainant said that during breakfast she heard a gunshot and when she looked out her kitchen window, she saw a vehicle on the roadway. As she watched, a man got out of the truck with a rifle and the vehicle began to roll backwards. Apparently the man was so excited that he forgot to put the vehicle in park. After chasing his truck down the road to stop it, the man entered the woods and recovered the four-point buck that he had shot. Over the phone, the woman gave ECO Kelly a detailed description of the man, his vehicle and license plate number. Unfortunately, ECO Kelly did not get there in time, but through his investigation he found out the man lived in the town of Westbury on Long Island. ECO Kelly relayed this information to Nassau County ECO Erik Dalecki who met and interviewed the man at his home later that same day. When faced with the detailed account from the eyewitness, the man admitted to taking the deer illegally. He was ticketed for discharging a firearm within 500 feet of a residence, taking deer from a motor vehicle and taking deer from a highway. ECO Kelly recovered the deer, which was hidden at a camp in Long Lake.

## Ask the Ranger

**Q:** Do I have to register and insure my snowmobile to ride on snowmobile trails on DEC land or easements administered by DEC?

**A:** Yes. All snowmobiles operated in New York State must be registered and insured in New York. The exception is when the operator owns the land he or she is operating on, or if the snowmobile is operated on a trail in an adjacent state that occasionally crosses into New York.