



# On Patrol

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

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## **K-9's Nose Knows—Herkimer County**

In October, ECO Steve Shaw received a call from a homeowner who stated that someone had shot a doe from the road near his house and then came back a few minutes later to pick it up. The homeowner gave a vehicle description and a plate number. A short time later, ECO Shaw located the car in question and called ECO Corey Schoonover for assistance with the traffic stop. The car's three occupants had spots of blood on them. When asked where the deer was, they all stated that one of them had shot a five-point buck that morning and that was the source of the blood. The men had just come from a nearby house, where the five point buck was supposed to be hanging. ECO Schoonover and his K-9 Griz went to the house and found the buck hanging in the garage with a legal tag on it. ECO Schoonover then asked Griz to "find the meat," a command that instructs the dog to locate any venison in the area. The K-9 went to the backyard and quickly uncovered a doe buried under dirt, leaves and sticks. Five tickets were issued to the three men. The shooter was charged with having a loaded firearm in a motor vehicle, discharging a firearm from a public highway, and possession of an illegal doe deer. The other two were charged with possession of an illegal doe deer.

## **Fish For Sale—Kings County**

Recently, ECO Kevin Thomas was in Sheepshead Bay in plain clothes doing surveillance when he noticed a commercial charter boat attracting a large crowd. He went over to investigate and found a crew member with 33 out-of-season fluke and several other fish that were under the legal size limit displayed on the deck. The crew member was offering the fish for sale. Thomas contacted ECO Jennifer Okonuk who arrived to issue summonses and document the evidence. The crew member received tickets for possession of undersized fish, possession of out-of-season fish, and selling fish without a permit.

## **Stay on the Trail—Greene County**

Kaaterskill Falls, a popular hiking destination in the Catskills, was the site of a recent rescue operation. Despite numerous signs warning visitors of the sheer cliffs and slippery footing past the end of the official trail, many often choose to climb on the steep slopes along both sides of the falls. On this day, three individuals were hiking along the east side of the falls when midway up the steep slope, one of them slipped, sliding and tumbling approximately 50 feet onto the cliff edge of the lower portion of falls. The person then continued his harrowing descent, falling approximately 60 feet onto the rocks below, suffering multiple injuries that left him in serious condition. Eight forest rangers and fire department & rescue squad personnel responded to the scene. While paramedics tended to the hiker's injuries, forest rangers and other rescue personnel prepared for a helicopter hoist evacuation and a back-up half-mile carry-out rescue. Fortunately, weather and flight conditions were ideal and he was safely extracted and flown to Albany Medical Center where he was treated and eventually released.

## **ASK the ECO**

**Q:** If I shoot a deer while I'm hunting but can't locate it right away, can I track the wounded animal after dark? Are there any restrictions on the type of light I can use?

**A:** Yes, you may go out after legal hunting hours to look for a wounded deer. You may use any size or type of light you wish, however you may not bring along any firearm or long bow as that would be a violation of Environmental Conservation Law.