

On Patrol

Real stories from Conservation Officers and Forest Rangers in the field

Carl Heilman II

Contributed by ECO Lt. Liza Bobseine and Forest Ranger Capt. Stephen Scherry



Got Carrots?—Franklin County

Following up on a tip, Ranger Jeffrey Balerno, Ranger Kevin Burns, and ECO James Cranker scouted an area of state land near the hamlet of Loon Lake. There, they located numerous ATV trails which led to illegal tree stands, large bait piles and cut trees (to create clear shooting lanes). The rangers and ECO tracked the trail system to the back of a nearby hunting camp. On opening day of deer season, the rangers and ECO approached the three stands simultaneously just before dusk, and discovered two of the three stands were occupied with individuals hunting over very large bait piles of carrots and corn. The subjects were escorted back to camp, ticketed for several offenses (including failure to carry a hunting license, hunting over bait, and illegal use of ATVs on state land), and released for a later court date.

The K-9 Nose Knows—Sullivan County

ECO Scott Steingart and K-9 Buck were called to assist ECO Ricky Wood in locating a shotgun shell after a man allegedly fired a gun from St. Joseph's Road in Forestburg, killing a turkey. K-9 Buck located the shell casing where it had ejected near the road and also the wad from the shell.



The Brooklyn man ultimately confessed to the illegal taking and remarked, "You can't fool a dog's nose!" ECO Wood took him for arraignment in the Town of Forestburg, where he pled guilty and paid a \$450 fine.

Even the Kitchen Sink—Delaware County

ECO Nathan Doig was on patrol on a back road in the Town of Masonville when he saw heavy smoke from a distance. He responded to the source of the smoke, and the resident stated that he was "just burning a little bit of brush." ECO Doig and the individual walked to where the fire blazed, and the officer observed that the "little bit of brush" included a large kitchen sink. As it turned out, the resident also was burning household garbage, insulation, construction and demolition debris, plastic, and several other types of material. He was unable to extinguish the fire, so ECO Doig contacted the Masonville Fire Department. The individual was charged under New York State's Open Fire Regulations, prohibiting the burning of the type of household waste found in the fire.

Turtle Power—Queens County

Marine Unit ECOs Kevin Thomas and Brent Wilson were patrolling the Rockaway shoreline when they stopped in front of a breakwall to check an angler who had parked his car along the road and was arranging his gear. ECO Thomas noticed something moving on the floor of the car and discovered a diamondback terrapin, a protected native marine turtle. The angler claimed he had found it along the rocks by the water (which required hopping over a restricted-access wall) and decided to "help" the turtle by transporting it a few miles down the road to throw it off a 15-foot wall into the water. The ECOs, skeptical of the man's supposed good intentions, discovered an undersized summer flounder in his possession as well. The man was issued summonses for possession of undersized summer flounder and for taking diamondback terrapin out of season. The turtle was (gently) released, unharmed, back into the state's water.

