



Great Catch

I thought I'd share this photo of my grandson, Kincaid Pollock, age 13, with his 26 in. lake trout that he caught at Raquette Lake Winter Camp Abilities. Kincaid loved attending the camp, which is available for children and teens who are blind or visually impaired.

Elizabeth Pollock
Fulton, NY

Great job, Kincaid! That's an impressive catch. Lake trout are native to New York. They live in deep, cold, well-oxygenated lakes, and are mostly found in the Adirondacks, the Finger Lakes and the Great Lakes.

Early Snow

I thought you might be interested in a photo that was taken during our first snow this year: in mid-October.

Alex McCombie, Palermo, NY

The snow may have taken all of us by surprise, but this coyote seems quite comfortable. The blanket of white makes it easier for it to spot prey.



An Uncommon Pair

I took this photo of an albino tree swallow along the Niagara River in Gratwick Park in North Tonawanda. This bird was stirring up interest among local birders. Then less than two months later, I spotted another true albino—a mink—in the same small park. What are the odds?

Christopher Kundl, Niagara County



*Of all the types of albinism, complete albinos (indicated by having red eyes) are the rarest. With regards to birds, one source states that 1 in 1,800 individuals shows signs of albinism. A 1965 review of albinism in the journal *Bird Banding* found that only 1 of 7 albino birds were complete albinos. If these figures hold true, the odds of a true albino bird would be about 1 in 12 - 13 thousand.*

Full or true albinos are caused by a genetic mutation that does not allow the animal to produce melanin. That's why the plumage / fur, skin and even the eyes lack pigment. Albino birds rarely live to adulthood: the lack of pigment in the eye negatively affects vision, and the feathers lack the durability that melanin provides, making them more brittle. In addition, all albino animals are easier targets for predators because their white coloring makes them stand out. In the case of the mink, which is

a predator, the white coloring would make it hard to sneak up on prey, except on land in winter when there is snow cover.

Ray Perry

Director, DEC Five Rivers Environmental Education Center

Bear of Another Color

My trail cam caught this cinnamon-colored black bear near Cameron, NY.

Dave Dieter, Cameron, NY



What a lucky shot! Brown-phase black bears, more frequently called “cinnamon” bears, are quite common in the western U.S., but not so much here. You were fortunate to get this.

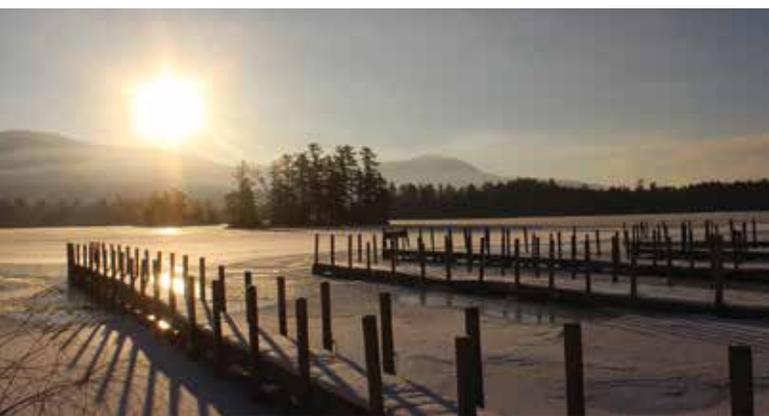
—Art Kirsch, DEC Wildlife Biologist

Winter's Beauty

Taking nature and scenery photos is my favorite pastime. I took this sunrise photo from the docks on Lake George.

Linda Ehntholt, Granville, NY

Great photo! Winter in New York is beautiful, and a great time to get outside and enjoy all kinds of cold-weather activities.



Ask the Biologist

Q: I spotted this deer family while I was hiking in Durand Eastman Park in Monroe County. How common are triplet fawns?

—Mary Wray



A: These look like some nice, healthy deer. Research conducted by DEC wildlife biologists in 2007 – 2009 found that approximately 4% of pregnant adult females had triplet fawns in utero. The proportion of pregnant females to successfully give birth to triplets, however, would be slightly lower. And the proportion to successfully rear triplets to 6 months of age (when fawns are considered successfully recruited in the population) would be lower still. So this deer family is doing well.

—James Kelly, Senior Research Assistant, DEC/SUNY ESF

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