Halloween Flooding—Hamilton County

On October 31, Forest Rangers assembled a Swiftwater Rescue Team in preparation for the significant rain event predicted to impact Central New York and North Country areas. Eight inches of rain fell that evening and into the next morning, causing many local rivers to flood. Rangers utilized an airboat to rescue four individuals stranded by rapidly rising flood waters along the Sacandaga River. In addition, swiftwater rescue techniques were used to rescue another two individuals from a residence in the Town of Wells, and an elderly couple from the Town of Hope was rescued with an all-terrain vehicle. Rangers also assisted the NYS Office of Emergency Management with response coordination at the State Emergency Operations Center in Albany. A total of 57 Forest Rangers were involved in response efforts in many counties across northern New York State.

Endangered Lemur as a Pet—Delaware County

Acting on a tip, ECO Ben Tabor investigated a complaint of a person allegedly in possession of a ring-tailed lemur in the Town of Colchester. Diligent work paid off and the animal was located and seized. A summons was issued to a 58-year old woman for illegal possession of wildlife. She pled guilty and paid a $125 fine. Ring-tailed lemurs are an endangered species. Pebbles the lemur was successfully relocated to a new home and has acclimated well with her many new friends.

Emergency Beacon Rescue—St. Lawrence County

On December 17, St. Lawrence County 911 contacted DEC’s Ray Brook Dispatch regarding a distress signal received from an inReach emergency beacon in the Five Ponds Wilderness Area at Cat Mountain Pond. Due to the remote location and winter conditions, 10 Forest Rangers responded with two airboats to expedite personnel transport and rescue efforts. With coordinates provided by 911, a 38-year-old male hiker from West Point was found on foot in the early morning hours by Ranger Nathan Shea. The hiker was evacuated by airboat but declined medical care and was transported by family members to Tupper Lake. The hiker admitted he was not fully prepared for the hike and did not have winter-weight boots or enough food.

Bass Poachers Plead Guilty—Ulster County

In December, three Brooklyn men pled guilty to charges including the taking of black bass out of season and illegal commercialization of protected wildlife. ECOs Jason Smith and Lucas Palmateer issued tickets to the men at the Ashokan Reservoir after finding them with 35 smallmouth bass attached to a stringer line hidden on the shoreline. Two of the defendants’ vehicles were customized to carry tanks to hold and transport the fish. One vehicle was registered to a retail fish market in New York City. All three men were also charged with failing to wear personal flotation devices and trespassing; one of the men was also charged with fishing without a license. The men paid $2,425 in total fines and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection revoked their access passes and boat permits.