

# NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

## Division of Law Enforcement

625 Broadway, 3rd Floor, Albany, New York 12233-2500

P: (518) 402-8829 | F: (518) 402-8830

[www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)

## MEMORANDUM VIA EMAIL

TO: DISTRIBUTION  
FROM: Director Joseph H. Schneider  
SUBJECT: Division of Law Enforcement Highlights  
DATE: October 8, 2015

### **FISH AND WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT**

#### **Dangerous Trend in Dangerous Reptiles (Suffolk County)**

Lt. Matt Blaising and ECO Jeff Hull were called by Suffolk County SPCA to respond and investigate a complaint of a 3 ½' caiman that had been abandoned. Within 24 hours, it was determined that the caiman had been purchased to be an office pet, but after a few weeks of taking care of the overly aggressive animal, it quickly lost its appeal. The investigation is continuing.

The next day ECO Hull found himself once again involved with dangerous reptiles in Suffolk County. An anonymous tip came in to the SPCA that a subject had an alligator and a rattlesnake along with various other reptiles in the basement of his home.

Once at the residence, a 3 ½' American Alligator and a 5 ½' Western Diamondback rattlesnake were recovered. The rattlesnake was the largest and most aggressive ever seen by the agencies involved. Before handling the animals, Suffolk County Aviation had to be notified, as well as the two nearest hospitals with lifesaving anti-venom, in case things went awry. Both reptiles were safely secured. The resident was issued summonses for possession of an alligator, possession of venomous wildlife, as well as two counts of possession of a wild animal.



Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

### **Reptile Seizure (Nassau County)**

ECOs Ian Helmer and Rob Howe and Lt. Tom Gadomski were called upon to assist the Nassau County SPCA with an individual in possession of a 4' long alligator, along with hundreds of other reptiles and birds. The officers conducted a search of the residence and found and seized the alligator, several common snapping turtles, and several eastern box turtles. The man was issued summonses for the possession of the reptiles. The alligator was transferred to a licensed rehabilitator, while the turtles were transported to Tackapausha Nature Preserve in Nassau County.



### **Baby Kitty (Nassau County)**

The DEC regulates the possession and sale of indigenous and nonindigenous wildlife throughout NYS, and it is often up to the Conservation Officers to check these practices for compliance with state regulations. In New York, it is illegal to possess protected, threatened, or endangered wildlife and illegal to possess wildlife deemed dangerous. Under strict permitting requirements, the DEC occasionally allows certain individuals to possess animals that fall into these categories for educational purposes or for exhibitions. After receiving a complaint, ECOs Rob Howe and Ian Helmer had the fortunate experience of checking one of these permit holders in Nassau County, who is currently in possession of a baby tiger. The officers verified that the individual did have a valid permit to possess the tiger, and was in compliance of all ECL/6NYCRR regulations.



**Fugitive Fishing without a License (Montgomery County)**

ECO Jason DeAngelis and T/Sgt. Keith Isles decided to check some local fishing spots together. The officers witnessed three subjects fishing on the south side of Lock 12 in the Town of Florida. Upon conducting a fishing license check one of the individuals stated that he did not have a fishing license. He also did not have any identification on him. After some interviewing and database checks, it was determined that the subject was most likely wanted in Maryland for several felonies and that he had been living in New York for two years and had failed to register as a sex offender with the local police department. With the subject's true identity still in question he was taken to the Town of Glen Court for immediate arraignment for the charge of fishing without a freshwater fishing license where the local criminal court judge sentenced him to five days in jail. The subject was immediately remanded to Montgomery County jail by Officer DeAngelis and Sgt. Isles. Sgt. Isles then cleared to return home and collect his K-9 to assist with a search for a lost person in Schoharie County.

Further investigation by Officer DeAngelis and Trooper Matthew Wheeler of SP Fonda revealed the subject's definitive identity and criminal history. Through contact with the Baltimore City PD and the Baltimore County Sheriff's Office, it was revealed that the subject was convicted of 2nd degree rape and was a tier three sex offender who is required to register for the remainder of his life. Warrants for failure to register as a sex offender, a felony drug charge and a violation of probation existed out of Maryland. The Baltimore PD Sergeant in charge of the sexual offender registry was happy to hear from his New York counterparts. The case was turned over to Trooper Matthew Wheeler for prosecution. Prosecution will include charging the subject with being a fugitive from justice; a felony. This charge has no bail and the subject's extradition is imminent.

**Fisherman Harassment (St. Lawrence County)**

ECO Joe Munn was assigned to help with security at the B.A.S.S. Master's fishing tournament out of Waddington. The Tournament's Director called to inform Officer Munn of a situation occurring between a professional fisherman and a camp owner in Chippewa Bay in the Town of Hammond. The camp owner had approached a fisherman to ask him to stop fishing in front of his dock. The fisherman explained that he had the right to fish where he was. The camp owner, not happy with that, got in his own boat and started to drive circles near the fisherman's boat and started to yell at him. During the ordeal, the Tournament Marshall was able to obtain the boat registration number. The Director of the Tournament provided Officer Munn with the registration number. After running the registration, Munn learned that the boat was registered to an individual from Rochester. Realizing he didn't have an address for the suspect, Officer Munn started to drive down the numerous camp roads on Chippewa Bay. Finally, after about three hours, he located the boat on a dock. At that time, he interviewed the suspect who admitted that he did drive circles near the fisherman because he didn't think it was right that the fisherman could fish there. After taking several statements from witnesses and completing his investigation, Officer Munn served the individual with a criminal summons for the harassment of the fisherman.

### **Deer Jacking in August (St. Lawrence County)**

ECO Joe Munn received a call from a St. Lawrence County Sheriff Deputy informing him of a possible deer jacking that had occurred the previous night. The deputy advised Officer Munn that a witness obtained a license plate number. The plate came back to an individual from Jefferson County. ECOs Munn and Shea Mathis unsuccessfully tried to locate the individual in Jefferson County, and finally made contact with the owner of the vehicle by phone. Officer Munn learned that the vehicle was being driven by the owner's son who was living at a friend's house in Star Lake. The next day, Munn located the vehicle in Star Lake and quickly noticed that there was a rifle and a spotlight in the front seat of the car. Shortly after observing the rifle, the driver of the car came outside. Officer Munn asked the subject if he could check the rifle and, to both their surprise, the rifle was still loaded. After a quick interview, the individual confessed that he was the one that was out deer jacking with a couple of friends. Officer Munn issued the man several tickets for the deer jacking that had occurred.

### **Illegal Fawn (Erie County)**

ECO Mark Mazurkiewicz received a call from the Cheektowaga PD requesting his assistance with a man who had discharged a firearm within 500 feet of multiple neighbors' residences. Upon his investigation Officer Mazurkiewicz determined that a 23 year old Cheektowaga man had shot a three month old fawn from the window of his home, which is in an area closed year round to big game hunting. In addition to killing the deer, the individual also shot and killed two sparrows.



Officer Mazurkiewicz charged the subject with taking an illegal deer in a closed season, taking a deer in a closed area, hunting deer with rim-fire ammunition, discharge a firearm within 500 feet of a dwelling, and hunting wild deer without a hunting license. Cheektowaga Police charged the man with reckless endangerment in the first degree and prohibited discharge of a firearm in the town of Cheektowaga. The man faces up to seven years in prison and up to \$5,000 in potential fines.

### **Kingfisher Rescue (Oswego County)**

ECO Dave Thomas responded to a call in Altmar of a Kingfisher stuck in a tree on the Salmon River in the lower fly fishing zone. Upon arrival Officer Thomas saw the bird dangling over the river. There was a fish hook through the bird's leg, which was attached to a line wrapped around a tree branch. The kingfisher was left hanging upside-down and clearly exhausted from struggling. This particular section of the Salmon River was much too deep to stand in so Officer Thomas enlisted the help of DEC Operations staff and passers-by. He threw a rope around the branch as Operations staff cut the branch with a



pole saw. The branch gave way and the rope was used to pull the bird to shore immediately after it splashed into the river. The hook was removed from the bird's leg, and Officer Thomas transported it to a local wildlife rehabilitator. The kingfisher is expected to make a full recovery.

### **Really Smallmouth Bass (Onondaga County)**

When an ECO asks, "Do you have any fish?" and a fisherman replies, "Sort of", it's often an indication that some Environmental Conservation Laws were broken. That was exactly the case when ECO Don Damrath was checking fishermen at the State boat launch on Skaneateles Lake. "Sort of" turned out to mean that the two fishermen possessed over their legal limit of smallmouth bass, nine of which were undersized. One of the fisherman was originally from Long Island and claimed he was unaware there were freshwater fishing regulations in upstate New York as he was accustomed to fishing only saltwater.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT (Articles 17, 19, 27, 33, 35, 37, 40, etc.)**

### **Messy Paint Job (Nassau County)**

ECOs Michael Unger and Christopher DeRose were patrolling in Freeport when they noticed a heavy paint stain on the street on St. Mary's Place. They investigated further and found that a vehicle rim painting business was the one responsible. After questioning the manager, the officers determined that a worker bypassed a clogged drain and actively pumped excess paint and water from their work area into the street. Additionally, an unpermitted spray painting booth was located on the premises. The company was issued summonses for depositing noisome unwholesome substance on a roadway, disposing on noxious substance into a storm drain, discharging waste without a permit and operating an unpermitted air contaminate source.



### **Illegal Pesticide Application (Westchester County)**

ECOs Dustin Dainack and Tom Koepf were patrolling in the City of Rye for illegal pesticide applicators when they observed a landscaping truck with a backpack sprayer set next to it on the grounds of the Westchester Country Club. The truck had no decals to indicate it was a registered pesticide company. No employees were found in the truck so the officers waited in the parking lot. Several moments later a man returned to the vehicle, picked up the sprayer, looked around and started spraying an unknown substance onto the weeds. The officers approached the man, who was identified as the owner of the business. The subject admitted to not being registered or trained in the proper use of pesticide application. Officer Dainack issued three tickets to the owner for operating an unregistered pesticide business, applying pesticides without certification and possessing an unlabeled pesticide container. He also educated the owner on the process to become trained and certified in the proper use of pesticides.



### **Underage Drinking Bonfire Party (Schoharie County)**

While patrolling Mallet Pond State Land for night fishing activity, ECO Keith Isles observed approximately 100 people having a party in the parking lot. There was a large bonfire and about 25 pickup trucks blocking vehicle entry to the site. Officer Isles requested assistance from the Schoharie County Sheriff's Office and NYS Police.



Sixty-eight people, mostly college students, were identified with only one person being over 21 years old. Four subjects admitted to bringing the pallets that were being burned in the bonfire, and they were ticketed for having a prohibited fire on state lands, returnable in the Town of Fulton Court. The students were provided the opportunity to "find" any alcohol hidden in the woods, to completely clean up the area, and load the remaining pallets into trucks and to leave the area.

The information was turned over to the NYS Forest Rangers for follow up patrols.



**Crime Does Not Pay... But It Can Cost (Franklin County)**

ECO Kevin Riggs charged a Malone resident with the illegal open burning of salvage, a misdemeanor. The defendant committed a grand larceny of copper wire in the Village of Malone and was charged by the Village PD. To prevent detection, he went to the Deer River State Forest in the Town of Brandon to burn the wire coating off. Upon arrest, he was issued an appearance ticket for the Town of Brandon Court.

**Burn Complaint Leads to Wetlands Violations (Jefferson County)**

ECO Shea Mathis responded to a complaint of an open burn in the Town of Cape Vincent. The complainant alleged that someone had cleared land with a bulldozer near a wetland and burned entire trees from the operation. Officer Mathis patrolled to the site of the open burn and found the large pile of trees still burning. As no one was in the area, Officer Mathis coordinated with the local fire department to have the fire put out. Upon further investigation, Mathis found that many of the trees were removed from a regulated wetland with the bulldozer. After interviewing the owner of the property, he Mathis found out that the fire had been left burning for days unattended. The property owner was issued notices of violation for conducting a regulated activity in a wetland and the open burning of unpermitted materials. The property owner faces thousands of dollars in penalties for the offenses and must remediate the damage done to the wetland.



**Illegal Boat Disposal (St. Lawrence County)**

ECOs Mike Sherry and Scott Atwood were working on a joint investigation involving illegal disposal of solid waste in several townships. The investigation revealed that a local marina on Black Lake in the Town of Morristown contracted with two individuals to legally dispose of 70 boats. The two individuals were to take the boats to a third-party residence, strip off the metal from the boats and then legally dispose of the boats.

The officers conducted several interviews, secured evidence, and tracked down all of the boats that had been illegally disposed of. The ECOs determined that two individuals collected the boats from the marina and illegally disposed of multiple boats in multiple townships.

The officers charged both individuals with illegal disposal of solid waste over ten cubic yards in the Town of Macomb. This offense is a class B misdemeanor and carries a fine of not less than \$3,750 per day nor more than \$22,500 per day of violation and/or up to three months imprisonment. The officers also charged them with several counts of illegal disposal of solid waste in several other townships, where it is a violation and carries a fine of not less than \$1,500 nor more than \$15,000 per day of violation or by imprisonment for not more than 15 days or by both such fine and imprisonment.

**Oh No, Not You Again (Erie County)**

While patrolling northern Erie County ECO Chuck Wilson observed a dump truck emitting thick black smoke from its exhaust system. The vehicle was stopped and a smoke test was performed. The test determined the opacity to be at 95%, well above the 55% allowed for that diesel vehicle. A ticket was given to the driver to appear in the Town of Clarence Court.

While on patrol later in the neighboring Town of Newstead Officer Wilson passed a dump truck traveling in the opposite direction. As the vehicle passed, the officer observed several pieces of insulation blow off the back of the truck. The officer quickly turned around and stopped the vehicle. As the officer approached he recognized the operator as the same man he stopped earlier in the month for excessive smoke. Officer Wilson was greeted with "Oh no, not you again." Unfortunately for the driver he received two additional tickets, one for depositing debris on the highway and another for transporting an uncovered load of solid waste.

**Foul-mouthed Granny Full of Fire (Onondaga County)**

When ECO Don Damrath and Region 7 Division of Air Specialist Tom Gragg responded to an open-burning complaint in the Town of Skaneateles, they weren't expecting the 77 year old culprit's language to be fouler than the smoke, but they received an earful to go along with their nose-full nonetheless. As soon as Officer Damrath knocked on the door, the garbage burning granny launched into a profanity-laced tirade that would have made a sailor blush. The colorful language continued when Officer Damrath issued a misdemeanor summons for the illegal burn, an offense the woman had been warned about repeatedly.



**Not the Brightest/Unlawful Disposal (Cortland County)**

ECO Kristina Markey investigated a report of residential solid waste being dumped on private property in the Town of Truxton. Upon inspecting the several bags of garbage, Officer Markey found many boxes and papers with the same name and address on them. She responded to that address, less than two miles away, on the same road. When she asked for the man whose name she'd found on most of the evidence, she was told by his wife that he was out of town. She then asked who was in charge of taking the household garbage to the dump and was shortly presented with the woman's 18 year old step son. The young man admitted to throwing the family's garbage out down the road because he was "too lazy" to drive all the way to the dump. Officer Markey already knew some of young man's information because she held an invitation to his recent graduation party containing his name and picture that she'd found on top of the garbage he'd dumped. When she pointed this out he replied, "I'm not the brightest". He was then ticketed for the unlawful disposal of solid waste.

**NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION (Articles 9, 15, 16, 23, 24, 25, 34, etc.)****Balmville Tree (Orange County)**

Lt. Marty Townley with ECOs Mike Buckley and Matt Burdick were on scene when the Historic Balmville Tree was cut down. The tree was reported to be the oldest eastern cottonwood tree in the United States, and was over 300 years old. Unfortunately,



branches had recently fallen from the tree and the public safety concerns dictated that it had to be cut down. The officers were present to ensure that no one was injured as the massive tree was removed. The area was closed to traffic and the DEC officers worked with local police to assist with crowd and traffic control.

## **ENFORCEMENT OF OTHER LAWS (Non-ECL)**

### **Wrong Way Drunk Driver on I81 (Oswego County)**

Dustin Dainack was traveling northbound on Interstate 81 in the Town of Parish when a car approached him traveling south in one of the northbound lanes. Officer Dainack had to swerve to avoid a head on collision. He activated his emergency lights and siren and turned around at the next available spot in the median. He headed southbound in the southbound lanes until he observed the vehicle once again, still driving the wrong way as oncoming traffic dodged the reckless motorist. Dainack was able to drive across the grassy median and stop the wrong way motorist before any head on collisions occurred. The officer made contact with the driver, who was highly intoxicated, and ultimately turned the case over to the NYS Police.



### **Marijuana Eradication (Fulton County)**

In late August surveillance flights for illegally grown marijuana were conducted by the NYS Police Aviation Unit throughout Fulton County and the surrounding area. After spotting grow operations the helicopter would relay information to ground teams who then moved in to make seizures.

The detail was led by troopers and investigators from SP Fonda and SP Mayfield with assistance from ECOs Shane Manns and Matthew Clemens and other local Law



enforcement agencies. Over 250 marijuana plants and over 15 pounds of dried and processed marijuana were seized throughout the operations with arrests being made when possible by NYS Police units.

### **Charter Boat Violations (Warren County)**

ECOs Robert Higgins and Mark Klein patrolled to Lake George to respond to a complaint about people on a charter boat were netting fish with a seine net. The officers arrived at the Town of Hague boat launch to meet with the complainant who advised the officers that the charter boat had been netting fish near the boat launch for the last couple days. The officers met with a member of the Lake George Park Commission (LGPC) Marine Patrol and patrolled out on the lake to check the charter boat. They arrived to find a group of people fishing on the boat and proceeded to check for fishing licenses. They then noticed a seine net on board, but the charter captain stated that it had not been used. The charter captain was then asked to produce a baitfish receipt for all of the bait on board. He could not produce a receipt for the bait. He was then asked to produce his guiding license and guides badge, but he could not produce those either. The LGPC Marine Patrol Officer asked the captain for all of his information relating to his public vessel, but the captain could not produce any of that information either. The charter captain was issued tickets for failure to produce bait receipt, failure to have guides license, and failure to display guides badge. There were also several possible violations pending from the LGPC Marine Patrol.

### **DEC Police PWC Patrol (Oneida/Herkimer Counties)**

ECO Russell Ritzel took the initiative to patrol the waters of the state utilizing the DEC Police jet skis. The mission was to enforce the navigation law, conservation law, and look for people who may be intoxicated while boating. During the month, he was joined by ECO Steve Lakeman. Several lakes were patrolled including Delta Lake and Hinckley Reservoir in Oneida County along with the Fulton Chain of Lakes in Herkimer County. A total of 15 tickets were written for ECL and Navigational Law violations.

## **MARINE RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT**

### **Montauk JEA Detail (Suffolk County)**

ECOs Tom Hansen, Jeremy Eastwood, Robert Johnson, Kevin Holzle, and Marcia Goodrich ventured out to a very busy Montauk Harbor for a JEA dockside enforcement patrol. Throughout the day five commercial vessels, two recreational vessels, and one dockside fish shop were inspected by the officers. It was smooth sailing until the officers inspected the fish dock. The facility was in possession of seven untagged boxes of black sea bass, for which the season was closed in New York. Upon further inspection, the shop was found to be in possession of undersized lobsters. Officer Holzle issued tickets for the two violations and the lobsters were returned to the waters of the state.





### **Never a Dull Moment on the Marine Fishing Scene (Region 1)**

The following highlights exemplify the need for the ECOs to be ever vigilant protecting New York's marine fishing resource:

ECO Landon Simmons conducted overnight patrols to check for fisherman compliance along the north shore beaches from Wading River to Mt Sinai. A pattern quickly emerged, with waves of fisherman coming off the beaches with undersized fish at around 11PM. In total, from the two patrols, 13 individuals were issued summonses for possession of undersized porgy and one individual was issued a summons for undersized fluke. Nine of those individuals were also issued a summons for no marine registry. A total of 135 undersized fish were discovered and seized during the patrols.

ECO Tim Fay assisted an Old Field Village Police Officer at Cranes Neck Beach after the officer observed a large quantity of four different species of fish in possession by two local fishermen. Officer Fay confirmed the officer's observation, finding three undersized fluke, several undersized black sea bass, with a few out of season blackfish mixed in. Several legal porgy were also observed in the fishermen's creel. The fishermen left that night with a parking violation from the Old Field PD and four Environmental Conservation tickets for undersized species (fluke & black sea bass), one for out of season blackfish and one for fishing without a marine registry.



The next day, ECOs Ron Gross and Marcia Goodrich were on patrol at Captree State Park when a fisherman advised them that a group of four fishermen at the end of the pier were hiding fish. The officers had checked the group in question but they had said that they had no fish having caught lots of shorts, which they said they had thrown back. The complainant, however, stated that one individual from the group would run short fish to the car and hide them in the backseat. The officers set up a surveillance. After 20 minutes a fisherman from the group appeared with a yellow bag. He ran across the parking lot and put the bag in the backseat. The officers pulled up while the fisherman was still busy in the vehicle. Upon further investigation, the officers discovered six short fluke in the backseat of the car. After interviewing with the rest of the group, four summonses were issued; two for failure to



carry marine fishing registry and two for possessing undersize fluke.

### It's an Annual Event... (Kings County)

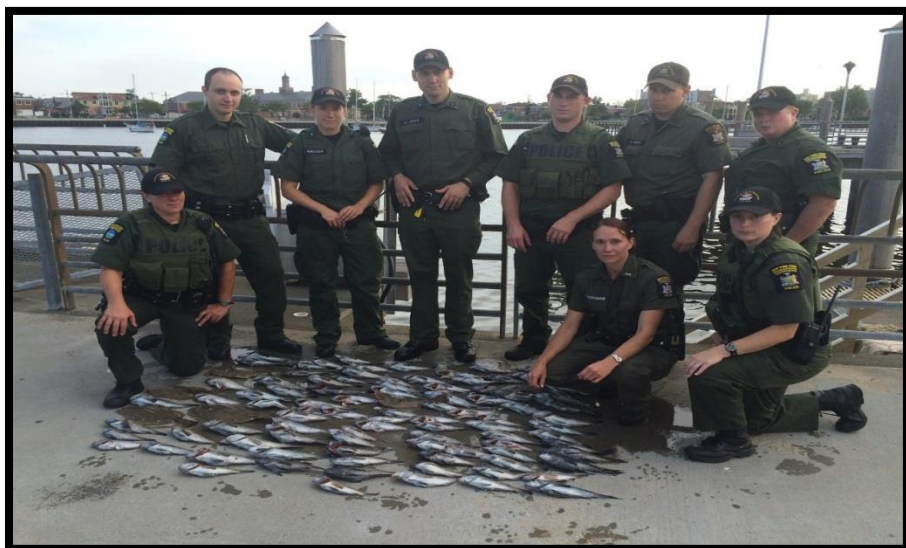
Region 2 ECOs conducted undercover fishing trips followed by boarding and inspection of vessels sailing from Brooklyn's Sheepshead Bay that were suspected of flagrant poaching. The effort was coordinated by Lt. Liza Bobseine and was assisted and made possible by support from Regions 1 and 3. Region 1 Officers Marcia Goodrich and Ian Helmer, and Region 3 Officers Matt Nichols and Myles Schillinger acted as undercover officers, spending the day fishing on their assigned target vessels and documenting violations at



sea. During that time Marine Unit Officers Walde Auguscinski and Jason Hilliard, supervised by Lt. Mike Trotter, conducted a routine boat patrol aboard A-12 to provide security for the plainclothes officers. ECOs Kim Iovino and Brad Buffa coordinated surveillance of returning individuals suspected of illegal commercialization. ECOs Jeanette Bastedo, Ed Piwko, Kati Reynolds, Brian Farrish, and Dawn

Galvin were joined by the other officers when the vessels returned to dock and completed a thorough inspection of fares and their catch. Nineteen summonses were issued and ninety-three fish were seized in the course of the detail. Violations included undersized and over limit black sea bass, scup, and fluke, and failure to obey a lawful order of a conservation officer.

One target of the detail, the vessel "*Lady Midnight*", was the subject of an identical detail 364 days previous to that date which had yielded similar results.



### **SIGNIFICANT MEETINGS WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES OR GROUPS**

Nothing to report.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

#### **East End Marine Task Force (Suffolk County)**

ECOs Tom Hansen and Rob Johnson participated in a multi-agency MSD/BUI Detail in Sag Harbor. Fourteen officers and personnel from six different departments participated in checking vessels in the harbor for compliance with regulations governing the operation of vessel sanitation systems. Two vessels captains were cited for operating with unsecured sanitation device by the officers, who also checked for BUI violations, but none were observed that day.



#### **Oil Spill Response Exercise (Nassau County)**

ECO Sean Reilly and Lt. Tom Gadomski attended an Oil Spill Tabletop Exercise run by USCG. The scenario had a large spill of an unknown source enter Jones Inlet. USCG, NYSP, NYS Parks, DEC Spills, Town of Hempstead, local fire departments and Nassau County all attended and participated.



### **20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Long Island Wildfire**

Major Tim Huss, Captain Dallas Bengel, and Lts. Frank Carbone and Tom Gadomski attended a ceremony with officials of the Pine Barrens Commission and other emergency responders to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic wildfires of 1995. Officials present noted the important changes made to better coordinate emergency response and wildfire training, including the establishment of a wildfire academy in Suffolk County, all as a direct result of the lessons learned in 1995.



### **Joint Checkpoint (Queens County)**

ECOs Kevin Cummings and Wes Leubner participated in multi -agency checkpoints with the MTA Bridge & Tunnel, NYC Sheriffs and NY National Guard. Commercial vehicles on and in the Queens Midtown Tunnel and the Triborough Bridge were checked for radiation, ECL, VTL, and 49 CFR violations. Two roll-off trucks from the same company were cited for 49 CFR violation by other agencies, and Officer Leubner cited the company for leaking exhaust and no safety chains.



**National Night-Out-With-Law-Enforcement (Orange County)**

ECOs Dawn Galvin, Chris Lattimer and Mike Buckley participated in the National Night-Out-With-Law Enforcement at Bradley Park in the Village of Walden. Hundreds of persons were in attendance. The officers and other local police agencies answered questions about their duties. DEC officers also showed off some police equipment including patrol ATVs.

**NY Air Show Stewart International Air Port (Orange County)**

ECOs Chris Lattimer and Matt Burdick assisted the NYS Police and Orange County Sheriff's Office with site security at the New York Air Show held at Stewart International Airport. DEC officers conducted ATV patrols around the perimeter of the property and areas not accessible by patrol cars to help keep the area secure.

**Stolen Cars in the Hudson River (Albany County)**

ECOs Kurt Bush and Scott Daly assisted the NYS Police dive team on the Hudson River with checking for a large number of cars that were dumped in the Hudson River. It was determined that most of the cars in the river were very old and moving them would cause more of a problem. Officers Bush and Daly assisted the dive team by use of DEC's A-10 boat to position the divers over the stolen cars and along the break wall of the river. A total of eight vehicles were found.

**Rescued Great Blue Heron (Delaware County)**

ECO Vern Bauer received a call from a homeowner who said there was a sick/injured Great Blue Heron in his barnyard. Upon arrival, the Officer Bauer observed the immature heron as it walked along a fenced in area of the barnyard. The heron did not appear to be injured. As Officer Bauer approached the heron and walked it towards a corner of the fence, it was apparent the heron did not have the strength to fly. He quickly secured the heron, which was severely emaciated and relayed it to Westbrook Animal Clinic where it was treated for malnutrition.



**Rescued Bald Eagle (Delaware County)**

ECO Vern Bauer received a call from Delaware County wildlife rehabber Kelli Brown asking for assistance in capturing an injured Bald Eagle on the West Branch of the Delaware River. The rehabber had received a call from an area resident who said the eagle was out on an island in the middle of the river. She said the eagle was there most of



the day and it had attempted to fly several times but failed. When Officer Bauer arrived on scene the rehabber and two DEP officers had already made their way onto the island in an attempt to capture the mature eagle. As they neared the eagle, it spooked and was able to fly about halfway across the river before falling into the water. The eagle was able to make it to the opposite shore and get out of the water. Daylight was fading quickly and Officer Bauer made his way across the river and he was able to capture the eagle in the thick brush on the shoreline. He transported the emaciated eagle to Greene County Wildlife rehabber Missy Runyon who blood screened the eagle for suspected toxin poisoning and treated it for malnutrition.

**Update on the “Birdie on 7” (Delaware County)**

The poisoned fledgling recovered from the Stamford Golf Course on May 15 made a full recovery, thanks to Barbara Runyan of Friends of the Feathered & Furry Wildlife Center and was ready for release back into the wild on August 29. The photo below captures ECO George Wilber preparing to release the juvenile Great Horn Owl at a nearby site in the Town of Stamford.





### **Fishing Derby (Delaware County)**

The Masonville Rod and Gun Club held its 4<sup>th</sup> annual fishing derby. The kids were split into groups of three and were chaperoned as they fished three different ponds. Roughly 18 kids participated in the event and every child went home with a prize. The Club presented trophies for the following categories; largest fish, most fish caught. ECO George Wilber attended the occasion and took a moment to thank the Club for hosting the event, and praised the attendees for taking advantage of these opportunities to get kids hooked on fishing and enjoying the great outdoors.

### **Woodland Tactical Operations**

ECO Luke Billotto instructed Woodland Tactical Operations at the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, State Preparedness and Training Center. The 25 officer class roster consisted of officers from all over the state including New York City. Some officers are routinely assigned to patrol and others to tactical teams. Topics instructed included basic land navigation, small unit formations and tactics, and movements under fire.

### **Family in Distress (Fulton County)**

ECO Shane Manns received a call from the NYS Police. They stated that a family of four, with two small children, were stranded on their boat that had been hung up on a sunken

island in the middle of the Great Sacandaga. After talking to the father of the family via cell phone, Officer Manns was able to determine their location and responded with his patrol boat. He navigated the patrol vessel in the middle of the night through several sunken islands and was able to locate the family. Officer Manns was able to get close enough to get a line to the family and tow them back to shore.

### **Floating Away (Hamilton County)**

While on a boat patrol of Lake Pleasant, ECO Peter Buswell and Ranger David Kallen observed a swim toy-type trampoline float in the middle of the lake floating free approximately 1,000 yards from the nearest shore. Assuming it had broken free of its anchor and was simply a hazard to navigation, they maneuvered their boat to tow it out of the congested center of the lake. On approach, they observed two small girls sunk down in the float. The girls, 8 and 10, were completely unaware they had floated so far, and had no idea how they would return to shore. Officer Buswell and Ranger Kallen attached a towline and returned them to their grandparent's dock. The grandparents had not noticed the girls missing as they were watching several other children and were very, very grateful for their return.

### **County Fair (Washington County)**

The Washington County Fair was the highlight of activity for most people in the county during the week of August 24-30. The Easton/Greenwich fair grounds is a wonderful mix of agriculture, education and recreation. DEC staff manned the log cabin building as they do every year, which has a variety of wildlife displays, as well as many educational brochures on wildlife, camping, invasive species, and many regulatory issues. Fisheries and Wildlife biologists and technicians, Forest Rangers, Conservation Officers, Mining specialists and DEC Operations staff shared duties at the fair.

### **DEC Police Booth at the Boonville Woodsman Field Days (Oneida County)**

ECO Russell Ritzel set up a booth at the Oneida County Woodsman Field Days in the Town of Boonville. The three-day event included participating in the annual parade with the DEC Police patrol vehicle. Officer Ritzel distributed literature and talked with the public about the work of a Conservation Officer. Lt. John Murphy also attended and spoke and answered questions from the public at the event.





### Combat Veteran Appreciation Shooting and Hunting Event



*Hunters front row left to right: Brett Lance (USMC), Tim Collins (USMC), Harold Cole (Army), Joel Schneller(USMC), Tim Freunds Schuh (USMC) and Guides back row left to right: Dino Amino, Aaron Gordon, Matt Lochner, Jason Pollack, Dave Schueler, Wayne County Federation, Bruce Ross, and Joe Bielowicz.*

What do you do to express your appreciation to the United States Armed Service Combat Veterans who fought so hard to preserve and defend our freedom as Americans? Well if you ask DEC Lieutenant Matt Lochner, Wayne County Tourism/Outdoor writer Chris Kenyon, Whispering Pines Hideaway Shooting Preserve Owner Charlie Buisch, and Wayne County Federation of Sportsmen Clubs President Gene VanDeusen, they would unanimously reply; “invite them to an all-expenses paid weekend long shooting and hunting event that embraces the very freedoms they fought so hard to protect”.



The Wayne County New York Sporting Event was coordinated by the aforementioned individuals with support from the following organizations and businesses: New York State Conservation Officers Association, Wayne County Federation of Sportsmen Clubs, Wayne County Chapter of SCOPE, and Whispering Pines Hideaway Shooting Preserve.

This year's event began with introductions and lunch followed by a very wet afternoon warm-up session of shooting sporting clays in the pouring rain headed up by ECO Josh Wolgast (USMC) in anticipation of the pheasant and goose hunts the following day.

Before daylight the next day, the hunters and guides headed to pre-scouted fields for a morning goose hunt. Although conditions weren't ideal, the hunters and guides had a lot of fun swapping stories in between flocks. After the morning hunt, everyone returned to Whispering Pines Hideaway for lunch prepared by Dave Schueler and John Thompson. Once the hunters finished eating lunch they headed back out to hunt pheasants at the Whispering Pine's pheasant fields.

Thanks to the time and effort put in by everyone involved, the 2015 September 11<sup>th</sup> Commemorative Combat Veteran Appreciation Event was a complete success. Everyone had a great time and the hunters harvested 11 geese and 21 pheasants during the hunt. All game meat that wasn't taken for personal consumption was donated to Clear Path for Veterans, a not for profit organization that focuses on Veteran integration needs through outreach, wellness and socially engaging programming. The donated game meat will be used to provide fresh from scratch meals at their weekly 'Canteen' and 'Warrior Re-set' dinners. For more information visit [www.ClearPathForVets.com](http://www.ClearPathForVets.com).

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