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| **ECO Actions for Early August**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Environmental Conservation Officers (ECOs) enforce the 71 Chapters of NY Environmental Conservation Law, protecting fish and wildlife and preserving environmental quality across New York.In 2015, the 268 ECOs based across the state responded to 25,000 calls and issued 22,000 tickets for crimes ranging from deer poaching to corporate toxic dumping to illegal mining, black market pet trade and excessive emissions violations."From Montauk Point to Mount Marcy, from Brooklyn to Buffalo, the ECOs who patrol our state are the first line of defense in protecting New York's environment and our natural resources, ensuring that they exist for future generations of New Yorkers," said Commissioner Basil Seggos. "They labor through long and arduous hours, often deep in our remote wildernesses or in the tight confines of our urban landscapes, and without much public fanfare. But their work centers around the most important things we do at the DEC."Recent missions carried out by ECOs include:**Septic Situation - Steuben County**On August 3, ECO John Lifrieri responded to a complaint in the town of Bath that involved the unlawful disposal of raw sewage. When ECO Lifrieri arrived on the scene, it was evident that excavation had taken place in the front yard of a residence. ECO Lifrieri spoke with witnesses, the owner of one local septic company, and the owner of a sub-contracted plumbing company. The interviews made it apparent that the contractors were illegally dumping sewage nearby. The lead contractor was responsible for dumping excess sewage from the excavation and the sub-contractor was unlawfully transporting regulated/sewage waste to one of his properties. Both contractors were cooperative and admitted to the violations. Both were cited for two violations each pertaining to the unlawful disposal of sewage at the original site, unlawful disposal of solid waste at a second location, and transporting regulated waste without a permit. The cases will be handled in Bath Town Court.**Green and Gray patrol Yields Catch of Undersized Fish - New York City**On August 4, ECOs Jason Hilliard, Jeffrey Krueger and John Gates conducted a boat patrol with New York State Troopers on the waters around New York City. The two agencies conduct joint patrols together regularly in an effort to protect the state's natural resources. During a compliance check of a group of fishermen, ECOs discovered a large number of undersized porgy. The ECOs and Troopers seized, counted and measured more than 70 undersized porgy. The fishermen were issued tickets for Taking and Possessing undersized Porgy.ECOs and State Troopers on a DEC Police patrol boat with undersized porgy.ECOs and State Troopers on a DEC Police patrol boat with undersized porgy.**Multiple Pesticide Violations - Westchester County**On August 5, while patrolling the town of New Castle, ECOs Tom Koepf and Geoff Younglove observed a landscaping company applying a pesticide to a residential lawn. The officers conducted a compliance check on the company and found multiple pesticide violations. The manager of the company admitted that his landscaping company was not registered to work with pesticides and that he did so to make extra cash. The landscaping company was issued seven tickets from the ECOs for violations that include Operating an Unregistered Pesticide Business, Failing to Place Warning Markers, Applying Pesticide Without Certification, Failing to Provide Pesticide Information to the Occupants of the Dwelling, and Unlabeled Pesticide Containers. The tickets are returnable to the New Castle Town Court, where the company faces charges of up to $17,500.**Fishing, Dumping and Navigation Violations - Westchester County**On August 7, while on patrol in the town of Somers, ECO Tom Koepf observed three vehicles parked on the shoulder of the road at a popular fishing location on the Muscoot Reservoir. Dusk was approaching, and the ECO observed three boats out on the water. Koepf put himself at a good vantage point along the shoreline and observed the fishermen through his binoculars. One of the boats contained two men who were fishing and drinking beer. Koepf observed one of the men place an empty beer bottle into the water over the side of the boat, allowing it to fill with water and sink to the bottom. The fishermen paddled to shore about a half hour later where ECO Koepf was waiting for them. Inside the boat was an empty cardboard package from a six pack of beer. When questioned as to the whereabouts of the beer bottles, the two men became speechless. They eventually admitted to throwing some of the beer bottles on the shore and sinking the others in the water. Neither of the subjects had a PFD on the boat, and one of them had been fishing without a license. A total of five tickets were issued by Officer Koepf for Unlawful Disposal of Solid Waste, Insufficient PFD's on a Vessel, and Fishing without a License, all returnable to the Town of Somers Court. One of the subjects' parents was also contacted to give the two men a safe ride home.**ECO aids victim of heat exhaustion - Bronx County**On August 8, ECO Kimberly Garnsey was pumping fuel for her patrol vehicle in the Bronx when a female motorist pulled into the station and frantically called out for someone to call 911. ECO Garnsey observed a young man who appeared to be in distress leaning out of the vehicle. ECO Garnsey grabbed her medical kit and assessed the victim, determining the man was suffering from dehydration due to the excessive heat, humidity and the victim's lack of fluid intake. ECO Garnsey instructed the station manager to get some water, and instructed the young man to drink while ECO Garnsey placed a cold towel on the back of his neck. The man began feeling better soon after. Paramedics arrived shortly thereafter but the young man refused to be evaluated, stating that he felt fine. ECO Garnsey advised the young man not to drive and to allow his aunt to take him home. He agreed and was very thankful for the assistance.**Illegal Dumper Incriminates Himself - Onondaga County**In early August, 2016, a City of Syracuse Code Enforcement Officer ordered a landlord to clean out a large amount of solid waste from the backyard of one of his rental properties. Neighbors had complained about the eyesore attracting animals to the garbage pile, and the landlord graciously complied. But instead of removing the pile legally, he allegedly dumped the solid waste in a vacant lot across the street. ECO Don Damrath, Syracuse Police Officer Romain, and a Syracuse City Public Works employee were able to confirm that the approximately six cubic yards of municipal solid waste, construction and demolition debris, tires, and paint had come from the backyard of the landlord's property. On Thursday, August 11, ECO Damrath charged the landlord with the Unlawful Disposal of Solid Waste in Syracuse City Court. The landlord now faces several thousands of dollars in fines, jail time, and responsibility for the lawful cleanup and disposal of the solid waste.If you witness an environmental crime or believe a violation of environmental law occurred please call the DEC Division of Law Enforcement hotline at 1-844-DEC-ECOS (1-844-332-3267). |
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