# Three Salmon Poachers Arrested After Early-Morning Chase

Three men suspected of poaching during the annual salmon run were arrested early Wednesday morning after leading police on a wild chase in the woods in Niagara County, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced today.

The incident occurred just after 2 a.m. when DEC Environmental Conservation Officers (ECOs) were conducting a night patrol along the Lake Ontario shoreline and its tributaries.

ECOs Roger Ward and Nathan Ver Hague were checking the Burt Dam area of 18-mile Creek in Newfane when they noticed several large garbage bags piled on a pathway. The officers inspected the bags and found them loaded with freshly caught salmon.

At the same time, a pickup truck slowly drove by the area. Two men approached on foot and ECO Ward revealed himself and ordered the men to stop. The men took off running through the woods. ECO Ward apprehended one suspect hiding in the brush, but as ECO Ver Hague chased the other down to the creek, the man dove in and swam off. The Niagara County Sheriff's Department was called for assistance.

Deputy Matt Grainge responded and located a pickup truck a short distance away matching the description given by the ECOs. The driver was sitting inside awaiting a call from the other two men.

Deputies Keith Hetrick, John Vosberg and a K-9 officer tracked the suspect who swam across the creek and eventually located him attempting to climb up a gorge. He was taken into custody.

A total of 69 salmon ranging in size from 5 to 35 pounds had been poached from the creek, the subjects using a weighted treble hook and net to snag the fish.

The three men - Sergey Yatchuk, 41, of 55 Applewood Ln., Getzville, Petro Parfenyk, 29, of 2204 Prospect Ave., Erie, Penn., and Mikhail F. Sakalosh, 39, of 8322 Taylor Colquitt Rd., Spartanburg, S.C. - were charged with 32 violations, including fishing without a license, possessing foul-hooked fish, taking fish by snatching, taking fish in excess of daily limit, and illegal fishing at night.

The three suspects were remanded to the county jail in lieu of bail, $1,100 for Parfenyk and Sakalosh and $1,000 for Yatchuk.