



Notes from the Streams

License check

In my earlier days as a conservation officer, I made several mistakes of asking only to see someone's "license." On many occasions, this prompted anglers to hand me a driver's license or hunting license and my having to follow up with a request for a license to fish. I now ask for a fishing license, but that still leaves the door open for what I might receive. My latest license check certainly proves that. You might even think it was an act of premeditation! By the time he was finished, the angler, who had "forgotten" to display his PA fishing license, handed over six valid fishing licenses, one at a time—for Ontario, Maryland, New York, Michigan, Ohio and finally, Pennsylvania! The fact that he chuckled a lot, passed over the PA license several times and had all of these licenses conveniently stashed at various places about his person was a mere coincidence! I just wonder how many days he spent at the lake waiting for this "coincidence" to occur!—*WCO James M. Vatter, Eastern Westmoreland/Northwest Somerset Counties.*

Shad in the United Kingdom

Last year, Alan Henshaw, fish culturist from the UK, visited the Van Dyke shad hatchery as part of a tour of American shad restoration efforts. As chief fish culturist for the Environment Agency in Britain, Mr. Henshaw is initiating a restoration effort for the Twaite shad, a smaller cousin of our American shad. The visit was productive. Mr. Henshaw learned the many specialized techniques we have developed to culture this fragile species. For our part, we not only exchanged information on fish culture techniques, but we also gained unique perspectives on sport angling in Britain.

Sportfishing in England (and in the rest of Europe, for that matter) is very different from sportfishing in Pennsylvania. While the Brits are fond of their fish and chips, they don't eat freshwater fish—they are reserved for catch-and-release sportfishing. Harvesting a fish would, in Alan's words, "cause a riot." The largest carp are actually given names and are recognized by their scale patterns.

The most popular sportfish is, of course, the carp. British anglers would salivate at the size and abundance of carp in our rivers and lakes. A fishing license in England costs about \$30, but that only allows you to "carry the equipment." Trespass fees, called "day tickets," running \$16 to \$25 per day, are also required for good-quality carp waters. A full-season permit may cost as much as \$1,000. This gives you only the right to *fish* for carp.

How much would you pay for a day of catch-and-release for carp? When you think about it, a Pennsylvania fishing license and trout stamp are the best recreation bargain around.—*Mike Hendricks, Fisheries Biologist, Van Dyke Research Section.*

Hognose on the loose

I received a call from the Schuylkill County Communications Center regarding a snake that the Shenandoah Police Department had in its possession at the station. They asked if I could stop by and pick up the snake and take it somewhere to release it. I arrived at the station and the officer handed me a plastic container with a box tied over the top. The officer was not sure what type of snake it was, so naturally I was curious about the snake's identification. I started out to the vehicle and thought it was strange that there was no movement in the container. I placed the container on the front seat of the vehicle and peaked inside—no snake. I proceeded back into the police station and informed the officer that there was no snake in the container. We started to look around the office when I noticed the snake, a hognose, lying on top of a table in the corner of the office. I was able to recapture the snake and take it outside to my vehicle. Not having anything to put the snake in, I had to use the same container. I placed some items on top of the container, hoping they would hold the snake for the short drive out of town.

I got in my vehicle and went only a half block and was sitting at the traffic light when I heard a loud hissing sound near my right shoulder. I looked just in time to see the snake crawling over my console and behind my seat. After quickly getting off the road, I left my vehicle, and after a brief search was able to recapture the snake again before it could make it up under my dashboard. This time, I held onto the snake until I could get it to an area outside of town and release it.

So anyone who may have seen a conservation officer leaving his vehicle in Shenandoah rather quickly or driving out of town with one hand on the wheel and the other holding a snake, now you know why.—*WCO Clyde N. Warner Jr., Eastern Schuylkill County.*

Labor Day dunking

While on routine boat patrol on the Allegheny Reservoir during the Labor Day weekend, DWCO Cook and I were flagged down by a motorboat operator. The operator of the boat informed us that a woman had fallen from a rope swing short of the water and had landed on the rocky shoreline across the lake from our position. We went to assist, and were the first to arrive on the scene to provide help. I had DWCO Cook take the patrol boat bow-first to the shore. He stopped the boat just about two feet from the water's edge and I stepped off the bow. Little did I know that the bottom went straight down! I was underwater completely except for my head and neck! I turned to DWCO Cook and said (while trying not to look surprised), "Boy, that water was just a little deeper than I thought."

After we stabilized and transported the victim to the marina, she was transferred to the waiting ambulance. WCO Martin then arrived to assist. I share patrol responsibilities on the reservoir with him. He and DWCO Cook began to inform me that swimming while on duty was not allowed. After drying everything out (except my boots), I tried to convince them that in spite of the heat, I was assisting a fall victim and not swimming, regardless of how it appeared. I do not think I convinced them. They just told me that it was my story, so I could tell it any way I wanted.—*WCO Robert F. Mader, McKean County.*

This is not entrapment

I realize that the overwhelming majority of subscribers to *PA&B* are honest sportsmen. However, on the outside chance that someone who would intentionally break the law is reading this, I want to offer a little advice.

Don't start screaming entrapment when you get caught. It is not entrapment for me to wear plain clothes and fish next to you. It is not entrapment for me to use an unmarked patrol boat to watch a restricted area that you like to sneak into to fish. It is not entrapment for me to hide in the woods and watch a specific area of stream when you don't know I'm there. It is not entrapment for me to post "Keep Out" signs and then cite you when you ignore them. It is not entrapment when I watch you catch twice the limit of fish and don't stop you before you go over the limit.

If you are a professional lawbreaker, then act like a professional when you get caught. Sign your citation and pay the fine, or change your profession before you have to.—*WCO Gerald B. Barton, Centre County.*

"Snow snakes"

Several years ago, I received a phone call from a nervous-sounding caller informing me that he was having a problem with snakes entering his mobile home. He indicated that he was worried that his children would be bitten. Snake calls to WCOs are common. What made this one unusual was that it came in the middle of February, on the day of the heaviest snowfall of the year.

With just the slightest feeling that there may be a "Notes from the Stream" lurking nearby, I put the vehicle in four-wheel drive and headed to the caller's home. After an interesting, to say the least, drive, I came to the mobile home hidden in a small wooded area. A knock on the door got me the response, "Come around back!" Going to the rear of the residence, I was met by three burly men. I asked where the snake was, and was told that it was under the home. As I prepared to crawl in, one of the men said, "Don't go under there—you'll get dirty." I explained that I had no other way to identify the snake(s). He then told me that when he had lifted a board, a piece of the snake's skin had frozen to the board, and he would show it to me.

From the skin, I identified the snake as a black rat snake. I gave the gentleman several recommendations on how to keep the snakes from entering his home—they had been crawling up a bathroom drain pipe—and informed him that these snakes were harmless. The homeowner thanked me for my efforts.

As I was preparing to leave, the caller remarked, "I'm glad they're harmless because next spring I'll have two of them." Puzzled by this comment, I asked him what he meant by that. He told me that the snake that he had picked up was under the board and when he tried to pick up the snake, it had snapped into two parts. Now the one part would grow a new head and the other would grow a new tail.

With only the smallest hint of a smile, I informed him that only nightcrawlers regenerated body parts, and I was sure that this snake had crawled up its last drain pipe.—*WCO David R. Keller, Adams and Western York Counties.*

When I grow up

Over the past few months, I've had the pleasure of meeting an 8^{1/2}-year-old boy. On more than one occasion, we discussed what he wanted to be when he grew up. A fireman, scuba diver or a paramedic seemed to be tied for first place. This young man helped us stock trout early in March, on an ice-covered lake known as Long Pond. We got wet and cold on this sloppy day.

After the stocking, all the helpers went their separate ways. On my way home, I stopped at a local restaurant for a quick meal. This same boy was sitting at the counter between two of the other stocking helpers, proud as a peacock, eating his dinner. When I sat down to eat, this youngster approached me and explained how much fun he had. Then he said, "When I grow up, I think I want to be a warden."

What a perfect end to the day!—*WCO David G. Kaneski, Northern Wayne County.*

Monongahela Bluefish

While on routine patrol last summer on the Monongahela River, DWCO Liptock and I were waiting to lock downriver when we noticed something floating near the dam. I maneuvered the patrol boat to get a better look and dis-



covered a large blue fish floating on its side. It was about three feet long and seemed to be of the fish family "Mylar," quite possibly a "Monongahela bluefish." I'm not sure if the fish had completely "expired" because it still had a bit of helium left in it. The fish was placed on board and pictures were forwarded to Area Fisheries Manager Rick Lorson in hopes of a positive identification.—*WCO Ronald J. Evancho, W. Westmoreland County.*

Monopoly card

WCO Stan Plevyak and I were patrolling the Delaware River when we stopped to check the Commission Riegelsville Access. We noticed three adult males drinking alcoholic beverages and enjoying the infamous rope swing. While watching their activities, they all threw their cans into the woods. I then walked to the other side of the path to prevent their sneaking away. It was then that I encountered four different males fishing without displaying their licenses.

Noticing that the men Stan was watching had not moved from the rope swing, I turned my attention to the fishermen. Once I had observed all four men fishing, I decided to check them. As I approached, two of the men began to drink alcoholic beverages. I decided to check their IDs.

One of the four fishermen had a license obstructed from sight. However, his two friends who were drinking did not. When I asked the last fisherman for his license, he claimed he had left it at home. I then asked for his driver's license to fill in a Notice of Violation Form and he said, "I don't have one." Finally, I asked him for any form of ID that he possessed, so he opened up his wallet and showed me what he had: A bright-orange Monopoly card that read "One Get out of Jail Free." All I could do was laugh.—*DWCO Lewis Sweigart, Upper Bucks County.*