



NOTES *from the Streams*

Unlikely fishing partner

For almost all Waterways Conservation Officers (WCOs), trout season marks the start of the busy season. Many anglers and boaters have cabin fever and want to get onto the water as the days get longer and warmer. Some outdoor enthusiasts bring their pets along to get them out of the house and into the fresh air.

The most common sight is a dog walking with their owner. And, a cat is more common than most people may think, either on a leash or in a carrier by the water with its owner. At the start of trout season in Berks County, I encountered a pet I have never seen on a stream before.

While patrolling the stream, I noticed a car parked next to a bridge—a good indication of anglers nearby. As standard practice, I began walking over the bridge and looking down at the water for the angler. I knew the angler was down there, because I saw a backpack and tackle box sitting on the bridge. When I saw the man, I asked for his fishing license and how the fishing was so far.

He showed me his license and replied that the fishing was good. I told him to have a good day. As I turned to leave and walk past the backpack, I heard someone say something to me. As I looked at the backpack for the source of the voice, I noticed it wasn't just a backpack. It was a pet carrier with a clear front and breathing holes. Inside of it was the angler's pet parrot saying hello to me.

Being an animal lover, I spoke with the angler again and told him that it was an excellent way to get the parrot outdoors. He agreed, and told me he had been taking his parrot with him everywhere. It loved meeting new people. As people who spend every day in the outdoors, WCOs see a lot of animals in their patrols. Now, I can add a parrot to that list.—WCO Derek A. Norman, Northern Montgomery and Eastern Berks counties.

Teaching opportunity

One day, I was walking along the banks, talking to every angler I came across. Checking license

after license, everyone seemed to be obeying the fishing rules and regulations. It was a good day. As I kept walking, I noticed two individuals along the bank that were frustrated with their fishing gear. As I got closer, I saw that their line was badly tangled. I offered my help, and they gladly accepted. During this time, I found out that it was a mother and son

duo who were completely new to fishing, and they had no idea where to begin. Then, I untangled the line and gave them a crash course on how to fish. I taught them how to rig their line, how to cast and how to bait their hooks. Afterwards, as I was about to walk away, I witnessed the son catch his first fish—a Bluegill—and he was extremely happy. Then, I showed them how to take a fish off the hook and release it to the water unharmed.

Teaching other people how to fish and sharing my love for the outdoors is probably my favorite part of the job. It made my day watching him catch his first fish. Hopefully, it made their day, too.—WCO Seth J. Strawser, Perry and Juniata counties.

Everywhere you go

I have traveled a large portion of Pennsylvania. Since I lived in Cumberland, Fulton and now Elk counties, I never expected to see an individual who once taught me in middle school.

On my first stocking while patrolling Fulton County, I met a middle school teacher. Months later, we bumped into each other again. He came up to me and said, "I was with you stocking in Fulton County." I replied, "Yes sir, how have you been?" We started to talk, and we both realized I was a student at the middle school where he taught. Turns out you find old friends and faces everywhere you go.—WCO Wyatt D. Peiper, Elk County.



artwork—Andrea Feeney