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Animal officer performs daring rescue of dog stuck on Hopatcong cliff

HOPATCONG — Dale Sloat's formal title is animal control officer. But Batman will do, too. Or maybe ... Dogman?

In any case, Sloat was hero to a K9 Saturday, when he performed a daring rescue of the dog, which had gotten stuck on a cliff.

Sgt. Michael O'Shea was the first to arrive on Daydream Lane Saturday, and there he saw a dog stuck 75 to 100 feet up on a small ledge, Lt. Thomas Kmetz said. The dog had been howling overnight, he said.

O'Shea drove onto nearby Altavista Trail — which brought him too high, about 40 feet above the dog, Kmetz said. So O'Shea called out to Sloat — who, over his career, has lost a finger to a cat bite, was once nearly trampled by a bear, and has been dragged 20 feet by a dog.

Sloat arrived, tied a rope to a tree and began lowering himself down the rock face, Kmetz said. He climbed down and was able to get a hold of the dog, then brought it up, Kmetz said.

But the dog then escaped again. It was picked up the next day on Pitney Road, but didn't have a collar, Kmetz said.

The dog remains in the Hopatcong Pound, and officials are seeking its owner. It's described as a cattledog mix.

Officials are asking anyone with information on the dog to contact 973-398-5000.

Sloat could not be reached for comment; he was not in his office Friday, and was not expected back until after Christmas.



By [Louis C. Hochman/NJ.com](#)
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