

Neighbor Accused of Having Cat Euthanized

New York man is arrested, charged with taking someone else's pet Russian Blue cat to an animal shelter to have it put to sleep.

Richard DeSantis of West Islip, N.Y., was arrested on charges that he abducted a neighbor's Russian Blue cat and took it to an animal shelter to have it euthanized.

According to police reports, officers were called to the home of Regina Fagone last week, who told them her family had a long-standing feud with DeSantis over some of her cats, which have gone missing over the years. Her husband, Jesse Fagone told police he keeps traps in his backyard for his job as a wildlife rehabilitator and helps wounded animals.

Police say an investigation confirmed that DeSantis, 56, had trapped the cat, named Coal, and took it to be euthanized.

DeSantis was arrested on April 15 and charged with fourth-degree criminal mischief, fifth-degree criminal possession of a stolen property, and making a false written statement. All the charges are misdemeanors; however DeSantis faces up to a year in prison if convicted. He is to formally face charges June 5 at First District Court in Central Islip.

In addition to the most recent incident, the Fagones told police that they found out through the Freedom of Information Act that DeSantis had taken two of their cats to be euthanized in December of 1998, but at the time they decided not to press charges.

Another of the couple's cats went missing in 2002 and was never found. Posted: April 18, 2006, 5:00 a.m. EST