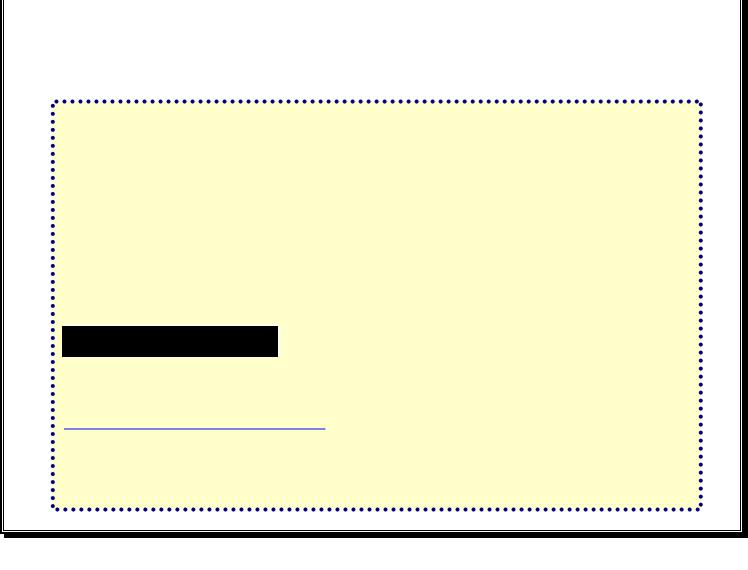
ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES



MONTHLY BULLETIN

April 2009

EDITOR'S NOTE:



ENVIRONMENTAL FUGITIVE ALERT UPDATE:

On March 10, 2009, Larkin Baggett, the Environmental Protection Agency's third most wanted fugitive, was discovered to be residing in trailer park located in the Florida Keys. EPA-CID and the Monroe County



www.epa.gov/fugitives

U.S. EPA/CID Wanted Poster March 13, 2009

Sheriff's Office were first on the scene. When Baggett saw the officers approaching, he aimed an assault rifle at them, causing the agents to open fire. Baggett was shot in the face and buttocks and airlifted to a hospital in Miami where he remains in critical condition under the custody of the U.S. Marshals.

Baggett was indicted in September 2007 in the District of Utah on two CWA violations and two RCRA counts for discharging wastes generated from his chemical distribution business with a pH of less than 5.0 into the local POTW. Additionally, between 2003 and 2005, he treated and disposed of hazardous wastes by, among other things, dumping them on the ground behind the plant and by allowing them to evaporate.

He fled Utah in April 2008, which was two months before his trial was scheduled to begin in June 2008. The District of Utah thanks the USAO in the Southern District of Florida, EPA-CID Region 4, the United States Marshal's Office, and the Monroe County Sheriff's Office for their diligent efforts.

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AT A GLANCE

United States v. San Diego Gas and Electric, 2009 WL 689627 (9th Cir. Mar. 17, 2009).

Districts	Active Cases	Case Type / Statutes
D. Ak.	United States v. Larry Hooton, et al.	Brown Bear Hunts/ Lacey Act Conspiracy
M.D. Fla.	United States v. Graham Brothers Construction Company, Inc.	Eagle Nest Destruction/ Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
S.D. Fla.	<u>United States v. Edward Saul</u> <u>Arias Ducker</u>	<i>Queen Conch Smuggling/</i> Lacey Act Conspiracy
S.D. Ga.	<u>United States v. Toru Shimoji</u>	Endangered Wildlife Sales/ESA, Lacey Act, MBTA
W.D. Ky.	<u>United States v. Game Trails,</u> <u>LLC, et al.</u>	Deer Hunting/ Lacey Act
D. Mass.	United States v. Carmelo Oria et al.	Vessel/ APPS ORB
E.D. Mich.	<u>United States v. Bryan</u> <u>Mallindine, et al.</u>	Wastewater Treatment Facility/ CWA, False Statement, Obstruction, Conspiracy
D.N.J.	<u>United States v. Holy House</u> <u>Shipping, et al.</u>	Vessel/ APPS, False Statement
D. Ore.	United States v. Reginald Akeen et al.	Eagle Feathers/ Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
E.D. Pa.	United States v. Moshe Rubashkin et al.	Textile Mill/ RCRA, False Statement
S.D. Tex.	United States v. BP Products North America, Inc.	Oil Refinery Explosion/ CAA
D. Utah	United States v. Jay Atwater et al.	<i>Furniture Restorer/</i> RCRA, CWA Pretreatment
E.D. Wash.	<u>United States v. Reginald</u> <u>Akeen et al.</u>	Eagle Feathers/ Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

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Significant Environmental Decisions

Ninth Circuit

United States v. San Diego Gas and Electric, 2009 WL 689627 (9th Cir., Mar. 17, 2009).

The Ninth Circuit has affirmed the district court's decision granting San Diego Gas & Electric Co. ("SDG&E") and two employees a new trial for violating asbestos work practice standards and for making a false statement stemming from the illegal removal of regulated asbestos-containing materials at SDG&E's gas holding facility. The circuit court agreed with the trial judge that the government's technical evidence on the asbestos content of pipe-covering created a fundamentally unfair outcome.

In July 2007, a jury convicted SDG&E on three CAA NESHAP violations and one false statement count. The court dismissed a conspiracy charge pursuant to a Rule 29 motion. Environmental specialist David Williamson and contractor Kyle Rhuebottom each were convicted of one CAA NESHAP violation, and environmental supervisor Jacquelyn McHugh was acquitted on the one CAA NESHAP count charged. Williamson was charged with a false statement violation for informing authorities that he was a certified asbestos consultant, which was untrue. The jury was unable to reach a verdict, however, and the court declared a mistrial on that count.

A sample of suspected asbestos was taken from the facility prior to commencing the asbestos removal. Analysis of the sample, which came from the coating of the facility's underground piping, indicated that the coating was regulated asbestos. SDG&E subsequently entered into a tentative agreement to sell the facility and was required to remove the underground piping. The company made statements that the coating removed from the underground piping was not regulated asbestos, in order to avoid the additional cost and time required to properly remove it.

The district court overturned the conviction after it became concerned about the admission of nonrepresentative samples collected at the site and that the samples were tested using questionable methods.

On appeal, the Ninth Circuit held that, given the complexity of the issues, the trial judge's familiarity with the evidence, and the ability of the trial judge to evaluate the witnesses, the district court did not abuse its discretion in coming to a different conclusion than the jury did. The circuit

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court further rejected a government argument that, even if the samples were obtained in violation of the regulations, they still were admissible as circumstantial evidence. Back to Top

Informations and Indictments

United States v. Reginald Akeen, et al., 3:09-CR-00103; 2:09-mj-00073-75 (D. Ore., E.D. Wash.), ECS Senior Trial Attorney Elinor Colbourn AUSAs Stacie Beckerman and Timothy Ohms

On March 12, 2009, four men were arrested as the result of an undercover investigation into the illegal killing of and trade in bald and golden eagles and other protected birds.

The charging documents, unsealed in the Eastern District of Washington and the District of Oregon, collectively allege Ricky Wahchumwah, Alfred L. Hawk Jr., William Wahsise, and Reginald Akeen, aka J.J. Lonelodge, with violations of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the Lacey Act.

According to court documents, an undercover operation was initiated whereby agents interacted with individuals who were in the business of selling protected migratory bird parts. One complaint alleges that a single covert purchase from Hawk yielded a bald eagle tail, two golden eagle tails, one set of golden eagle wings, four red-shafted northern flicker tails, four rough-legged hawk tails, and two northern harrier tails for a total of \$3,000. According to the documents, Hawk and Wahsise allegedly hunted and killed three bald eagles the morning of the sale by sitting near some wild horses killed to bait and attract eagles. A third complaint alleges that Wahchumwah sold one golden eagle tail to an undercover agent for \$500.

A fourth complaint, filed in the District of Oregon, alleges that Akeen made several sales to an undercover agent, including two fans worth more than \$3,000, which were made from juvenile golden eagle feathers.

Eagles and other protected migratory birds are viewed as sacred in many Native American cultures, and the feathers of the birds are central to religious and spiritual Native American customs. By law, enrolled members of federally-recognized Native American tribes are entitled to obtain permits to possess eagle parts for religious purposes, but federal law strictly prohibits selling eagle parts under any circumstances. The Fish and Wildlife Service operates the National Eagle Repository, which collects eagles that die naturally or by accident, to supply tribal members with eagle parts for religious use.

The arrests are part of an on-going investigation into the illegal killing of bald and golden eagles and other protected birds and the sale of their feathers and parts. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service is conducting the investigation with the help and cooperation of state, federal, and tribal law enforcement agencies.

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Pleas

United States v. Carmelo Oria et al., No. 1:08-CR-10274 (D. Mass.), ECS Trial Attorney ToddMikolopAUSA Linda Ricci (D. Mass.), ECS Trial Attorney Todd

On March 9, 2009, Carmelo Oria, chief engineer for the M/T Nautilus, pleaded guilty to an APPS violation for falsifying the oil record book.

Oria, who served as a chief engineer between January and March 2008, was responsible for all engine room operations. During that time, Oria ordered engine room crew members to discharge oil-contaminated bilge waste from the ship's bilges directly into the ocean. When the ship entered the port of Boston on March 22, 2008, the ORB failed to disclose these overboard discharges.

Consultores De Navegacion ("Consultores") and Iceport Shipping Co. Ltd. ("Iceport") the ship's owner and operator were previously charge in a six-count superseding indictment with conspiracy, falsification of records, false statements, obstruction, and an APPS violation for failing to maintain an accurate ORB.

Between June 2007 and March 2008, the companies, acting through Oria and other employees, directed engine room crew members to use a metal pipe to bypass the ship's oil water separator and instead discharged the oil-contaminated waste directly overboard. The charges stem from a Coast Guard inspection that began in the port of St. Croix and continued in the port of Boston. Subsequent investigation revealed that the ORB failed to accurately reflect the overboard discharge of oily waste water.

This case was investigated by the United States Coast Guard. <u>Back to Top</u>

<u>United States v. Edward Saul Arias Ducker</u>, No. 1:08-CR-20035 (S.D. Fla.), AUSA Tom Watts-FitzGerald

On March 5, 2009, Edward Saul Arias Ducker, a Honduran national, pleaded guilty to a Lacey Act conspiracy violation for his involvement in the smuggling of large quantities of queen conch taken from Honduran waters that was then laundered through Columbia to customers throughout Canada and the United States.

From approximately May 2004 through November 2006, Arias and other co-conspirators, including the owners of Caribbean Conch, Inc., and Placeres & Sons Seafood, Inc., companies located in Hialeah, Florida, engaged in the business of selling seafood products, causing the shipment of more than 115,000 pounds of queen conch from Honduras and Columbia to Canada and the United States without proper permits. Arias' role included arranging for vessels on two separate occasions, to transfer queen conch, harvested in Honduran waters, to Colombian vessels at sea for landing and processing in Columbia.

Queen conch is protected under CITES, but it is not listed under the ESA as a protected species. In September 2003, an embargo was enacted by the CITES parties for queen conch and conch products that originated from many of the conch-producing countries of the Caribbean to help stem the significant declines in the species due in large part to rampant illegal harvesting. The embargo banned all imports of queen conch to any nation that was a signatory to CITES.

In March 2006, a shipment of 2,100 pounds of falsely-labeled conch was intercepted by a United States Fish and Wildlife Service inspector in Buffalo, New York. The Fish and Wildlife Service's National Forensic Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon, conducted DNA analysis of the seafood product and confirmed it was queen conch and not whelk, which sometimes is used as a cheap substitute.

The 18-month investigation by Canadian and American enforcement authorities led to the simultaneous execution of search warrants in both countries and the seizure of more than 63,000 pounds of illegally traded queen conch, all of which had originated with Arias. The retail value of the smuggled queen conch was more than \$1.725 million. Three other individuals have been prosecuted in this matter. Arias is scheduled to be sentenced on May 15, 2009.

This case was investigated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office for Law Enforcement, and the Wildlife Officers of Environment Canada's Wildlife Enforcement Branch, Wildlife Enforcement Division, in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. The United States National Marine Fisheries Service and Canadian and American border officials also contributed to this investigation. Back to Top

Sentencings

United States v. Moshe Rubashkin et al., No. 2:07-CR-00498 (E.D. Pa.), SAUSA Joseph Lisa and AUSA Michelle Morgan-Kelly

On March 24, 2009, Sholom Rubashkin was sentenced to serve four months' incarceration, followed by three years' supervised release. He was further ordered to pay a \$5,000 fine, complete 250 hours' community service and was held jointly and severally liable for \$450,000 in restitution to be paid to USEPA and the City of Allentown, Pennsylvania, in cleanup costs.

Sholom and his father Moshe Rubashkin operated the Montex Textile plant, a textile dyeing, bleaching and weaving business that was subsequently declared a superfund site. After being in operation for 12



Abandoned waste

years, the plant closed in 2002 with numerous containers of hazardous waste left behind. After local authorities responded to two fires at the plant, EPA and the City of Allentown initiated a clean-up of the property in October 2005. In responding to a CERCLA 104(e) letter sent in February 2006 regarding the parties responsible for cleanup at the site, Sholom denied that his family had owned and operated the plant. Moshe previously pleaded guilty to a RCRA storage violation and Sholom pleaded guilty to a false statement violation.

Moshe Rubashkin was sentenced last December to serve 16 months' incarceration, followed by three years' supervised release. He was further ordered to pay a \$7,500 fine and is liable for the

\$450,000 in restitution, with \$396,728 to be paid to the United States Environmental Protection Agency and \$53,271 to the City of Allentown.

This case was investigated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division, the National Enforcement Investigations Center, and the Environmental Protection Agency Office of Inspector General. Back to Top

<u>United States v. Larry Hooton et al.</u>, No. 1:08-CR-00002 (D. Ak.), ECS Senior Trial Attorney Robert Anderson and AUSA Steven Skrocki

On March 24, 2009, Larry Hooton was sentenced to serve three months' imprisonment, pay a \$41,000 fine and \$30,000 in restitution to the State of Alaska and the United States Forest Service for illegally guiding brown bear hunts and taking brown bears on Admiralty Island, in the Tongass National Forest.

Big-game outfitter Larry Hooton and his two outfitter sons, Shawn and Shane Hooton, pleaded guilty earlier this year to conspiring to violate the Lacey Act for illegally guiding clients on brown bear hunts on federal property. Shawn was previously sentenced to serve three months' home confinement as a condition of two years' probation, and also must pay a \$30,000 fine. Shane Hooton was sentenced to serve a one-year term of probation and pay a \$20,000 fine. All three defendants must forfeit their hunting equipment and are subject hunting/guiding restrictions.

This case was investigated by the United States Forest Service, Alaska Wildlife Troopers, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Back to Top

United States v. Game Trails, LLC., et al., No. 4:09-mj-00004 (W.D. Ky.), AUSA Randy Ream



On March 19, 2009, Game Trails, LLC., and William Dirk MacTavish, Jr., the site manager for Game Trails Lodge, were sentenced for misdemeanor violations of the Lacey Act stemming from illegal deer hunting. The company was sentenced to pay a \$35,000 fine and MacTavish was ordered to pay a \$15,000 fine.

The charges arose out of Game Trails' practice of killing female deer over limit at its lodge between June 2006 and November 2007, and shipping parts of the wildlife in interstate commerce. Game Trails and its agents used the social security

numbers of hunters at the lodge without their permission to falsely report to the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's telecheck program that the deer were legally taken.

This case was investigated by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Back to Top

United States v. Jay Atwater et al., No. 1:08-CR-00114 (D. Utah), AUSA Jared Bennett (

On March 16, 2009, Jay Atwater was sentenced to serve five months' incarceration, followed by five months' home confinement, and two years of supervised release. Atwater was further ordered to pay a \$10,000 fine for unlawfully disposing of hazardous waste at his furniture restoration company. Heritage Restoration, Inc. was ordered to pay a \$25,000 fine.

During the furniture restoration process, Atwater and others acting under his control used a solution containing between 70 and 76 percent methylene chloride to strip the paint. The rinse water generated during this process was dumped into sub-surface soil on numerous occasions between approximately 2000 and April 2007 in



Excavated underground pipe

violation of RCRA. After April 2007, Atwater modified the process for disposing of the rinsewater by discharging it down a sink that led into a POTW, in violation of the CWA, resulting in toxic fumes and vapors with the potential to cause acute worker health or safety problems. Atwater previously pleaded guilty to one RCRA disposal violation and the company pleaded guilty to one CWA charge.

This case was investigated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division.

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<u>United States v. BP Products North America et al.</u>, No. 4:07-CR-00434 (S.D. Tex.), ECS Senior Trial Attorney Dan Dooher and AUSA Mark McIntyre



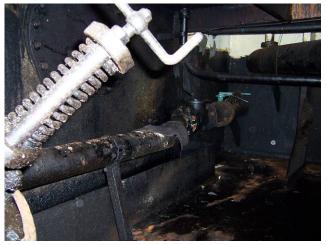
Refinery explosion

On March 12, 2009, the district court BP Products North America's ("BP accepted Products") guilty plea to a felony violation of section 112(r)(7) of the Clean Air Act. The prosecution stems from the March 23, 2005, explosion at BP's Texas City refinery that killed 15 people and caused serious injuries to at least 170 employees. The court sentenced BP Products consistent with the terms of the plea agreement, ordering that it pay a \$50 million criminal fine and that it complete a three-year term of probation. Conditions of probation include the company's compliance with two civil agreements to remediate

safety and environmental deficiencies that caused the explosion at the refinery. The explosion resulted from the ignition of hydrocarbon vapor released from a "blowdown stack" during the startup of equipment that was used to increase octane content in unleaded gasoline. The unit had been shut down for nearly a month for maintenance and repairs. BP admitted that, for many years preceding the blast, procedures required by the CAA for ensuring the mechanical integrity and safe startup of the equipment had either not been established or were ignored. This is the first prosecution under a section of the CAA specifically enacted to prevent accidental releases that may result in death or serious injury.

This case was investigated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in cooperation with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Back to Top

<u>United States v. Holy House Shipping, et al.</u> No. 1:08-CR-00824 (D.N.J.), ECS Trial Attorney Gary Donner and AUSA Ron Chillemi



Oil-contaminated ballast tank

On March 10, 2009, Holy House Shipping ("Holy House") was sentenced to pay a \$1 million fine with an additional \$400,000 to be paid as community service into the National Fish and Wildlife Fund to support projects to restore marine habitats in New Jersey. The company also will complete a three-year term of probation, implement an environmental compliance plan, and hire a third-party auditor.

Crewmembers aboard the M/V Snow Flower, a 568-foot Cook Island-flagged oceangoing ship, alerted the Coast Guard that they had been ordered by the chief engineer to discharge oily

sludge overboard while bypassing the oily water separator. The discharges occurred during a voyage

from Los Angeles, California, to Chile. In February 2008, during a port inspection of the ship in New Jersey, inspectors were presented with an ORB containing false entries indicating that oil sludge had been burned at times when the incinerator was not in use. Inspectors further discovered a bypass pipe and were told by crew members that a valve malfunction had caused one of the ballast tanks to be contaminated with heavy fuel oil, which was then pumped overboard.

The company previously pleaded guilty to one APPS violation and to one 18 U.S.C. §1001 false statement violation. Two whistleblower crewmembers were awarded \$375,000 that will be divided between them based upon their level of cooperation. Chief engineer Igor Krajacic was sentenced last December to pay an \$18,000 fine and will complete a one-year term of probation. He pleaded guilty to one APPS ORB violation.

This case was investigated by the United States Coast Guard and the United States Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation. Back to Top

United States v. Bryan Mallindine et al., Nos. 2:07-CR-20037 and 20030 (E.D. Mich.), ECS Senior Counsel James Morgulec **AUSA Mark Chutkow** and **RCEC David Mucha** (

On March 5, 2009, Bryan Mallindine, a former CEO for Comprehensive Environmental Solutions, Inc., ("CESI") was sentenced to serve a three-year term of probation to include 90 days' home confinement. Mallindine, along with two codefendants, was convicted by a jury last October of violations stemming from the illegal discharge of millions of gallons of untreated liquid wastes from the CESI facility. Specifically, Mallindine was convicted of a CWA misdemeanor for negligently bypassing the facility's required pretreatment system. Michael Panyard, a former president, general manager, and company sales manager was convicted Aerial view of tank farm on all nine counts in the indictment, including



conspiracy, Clean Water Act, and false statement counts. Charles Long, a former plant and operations manager, was convicted on both counts for which he was charged, which were conspiracy and a CWA violation.

In 2002, CESI took over ownership and operations at a plant that had a permit to treat liquid waste brought to the facility through a variety of processes and then discharge it to the Detroit sanitary sewer system. The facility contained 12 large above-ground tanks capable of storing more than 10 million gallons of liquid industrial wastes. Although the facility's storage tanks were at or near capacity, the defendants continued to accept millions of gallons of liquid wastes which the plant could not adequately treat or store. In order to reduce costs and create storage space at the facility for additional wastes, the defendants often bypassed treatment processes and discharged untreated wastes directly to the sewer. They also made false statements and engaged in other surreptitious activities in order to conceal their misconduct.

Former plant manager Donald Kaniowski previously pleaded guilty to a CWA violation and was sentenced on March 4th to complete a three-year term of probation. Kaniowski provided substantial assistance to the government and testified at trial. CESI previously pleaded guilty to CWA and false statement violations and will be sentenced in May. Panyard and Long will be sentenced next month.

This case was investigated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with assistance from the United States Coast Guard and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Office of Criminal Investigations.

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United States v. Graham Brothers Construction Company, Inc., et al., 6:08-CR-00267 (M.D. Fla.), ECS Trial Attorney Lana Pettus and AUSA Bruce Ambrose

On March 4, 2009, Graham Brothers Construction Company ("Graham Bros.") and Specialized Services, Inc., pleaded guilty to, and were sentenced for, a violation of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act for assisting in the destruction of a bald eagle's nest.

Graham Bros. and Specialized Services were involved in land clearing and other construction work at a residential housing development site, and were employed as contractors for the developer that owned this property. As early as November 2003, a subcontractor observed a bald eagles' nest on the property. In late December 2004 and early January 2005, as work on the project progressed, other members of the construction crew, including the defendant corporations' employees, observed the nest as well as at least two bald eagles. At least one employee talked to an on-site supervisor about the nest and was told to stay clear of it.

In January 2005, the defendant companies, after initially refusing to tamper with the nest, eventually allowed the developer's employees to use their heavy equipment to tear down the tree containing the nest.

Graham Bros. and Specialized Services were held jointly and severally liable to pay a \$75,000 fine, and will each complete a one-year term of probation, during which they will be subject to a focused environmental compliance plan that requires them to develop procedures to prevent the recurrence of the criminal conduct and to provide training about endangered species to their officers and employees.

This case was investigated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Back to Top

United States v. Toru Shimoji, No. 1:09-mj-00250(N.D. Ga.), AUSA Mary Roemer

On February 24, 2009, collector Toru Shimoji was ordered to pay a \$15,000 fine for buying the carcass of an endangered snow leopard and possessing more than 45 skulls of protected wildlife.

Shimoji bought the leopard carcass over the Internet in December 2007, from an undercover federal agent. A search of the defendant's home revealed skulls of other endangered species including sea turtles, tigers, grizzly bears, apes, and protected migratory birds. Shimoji pleaded guilty to multiple misdemeanor violations of the Endangered Species Act, the Lacey Act, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

This case was investigated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, with assistance from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Office of Law Enforcement. Back to Top

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