



PRESS RELEASE

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**MESCALERO MAN TO SPEND 45 DAYS IN JAIL AND PAY \$3,000 IN RESTITUTION
FOR ILLEGAL ELK HUNT ON THE MESCALERO APACHE RESERVATION**

LAS CRUCES – U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales announced that yesterday in federal court in Las Cruces, James Cannon Chino, 32, of Mescalero, N.M., was sentenced to 45 days in jail and ordered to pay \$3,000 in restitution to the Mescalero Apache Nation for unlawfully possessing three bull elk which had been killed in violation of tribal law.

Chino was arrested on a criminal complaint on Sept. 15, 2011, and pled guilty to an information charging him with the misdemeanor offense of illegal possession of the elk on Jan. 10, 2012.

According to court filings, on Oct. 4, 2007, officers from the Mescalero Apache Conservation Department and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish found Chino in possession of the carcasses of three elk that had been taken from the Mescalero Apache Reservation without proper permits. Chino admitted that earlier that day he served as a guide to three Texas residents on a bull elk hunt on the Mescalero Apache Reservation. Chino led the hunters, each of whom had paid \$6,000 to Chino for his services, to believe that the hunt was legal. After the officers discovered the elk carcasses, they contacted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to assist in the investigation.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Mescalero Apache Conservation Department, and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jacob A. Wishard.

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