



Department of Justice

Office of the United States Attorney Western District of Wisconsin

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 17, 2009
WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/WIW

CONTACT: AUSA PETER M. JAROSZ
PHONE: (608) 264-5158
TTY: (608) 264-5006

FOUR WISCONSIN BAIT FARMERS CHARGED WITH VIOLATING FEDERAL WILDLIFE LAW

Madison, Wis. - Stephen P. Sinnott, Acting United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced today the filing of four Informations charging four Wisconsin businesses with violations of the Lacey Act:

Gollon Brothers Wholesale Live Bait, Inc., of Stevens Point, Wis.;
Gollon Enterprises, Inc., doing business as Gollon Bait & Fish Farm,
of Dodgeville, Wis.;
Hayward Bait and Tackle, Inc. of Hayward, Wis.; and
Friesses Minnow Farm, Inc., of Cumberland, Wis.,

Each Information charges the named company with illegally importing bait fish from outside the state into Wisconsin.

The Lacey Act makes it unlawful to import, receive, and acquire, in interstate or foreign commerce, any fish transported in violation of any law or regulation of any State. Wisconsin state law prohibits the importation and transportation of live fish into Wisconsin for use as bait without a valid import permit and health certificate certifying that the fish being imported are free from certain diseases. The Wisconsin law prohibiting the importation and transportation of live bait fish into the state without a valid permit and health certificate was enacted, in part, to insure the protection of the resources of Wisconsin, while allowing for the future growth of the fish farm industry.

According to the Information filed against Gollon Brothers Wholesale Live Bait, Inc., of Stevens Point, the government charges that between January 4, 2007, and continuing until May 14, 2007, Gollon Brothers Wholesale Live Bait, Inc. transported, received, acquired, or purchased White suckers, Shiners, and Fathead minnows, having a market value of \$586,621.75, from companies in Minnesota and Arkansas without acquiring the necessary permits for the importation into Wisconsin.

The charge against Gollon Enterprises, Inc., doing business as Gollon Bait & Fish

Farm, of Dodgeville, Wis., alleges that between January 10, 2006 and continuing until May 15, 2007, Gollon Enterprises, Inc., transported, received, acquired, or purchased White suckers, Fathead minnows, and Golden Shiners having a market value of \$1,426,086, from companies in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Arkansas without acquiring the necessary permits for the importation into Wisconsin.

The government charges that between January 17, 2005 and continuing until February 13, 2007, Hayward Bait and Tackle, Inc., transported, received, acquired, or purchased White suckers and Fathead minnows having a market value of \$306,891 from a company in Minnesota without acquiring the necessary permits for the importation into Wisconsin.

In the Information against Friesses Minnow Farm, Inc., the government alleges that between January 10, 2006 and continuing until May 22, 2007, the company transported, received, acquired, and purchased White suckers and Fathead minnows having a market value of \$281,480, from a company in Minnesota, without acquiring the necessary permits for the importation into Wisconsin.

If convicted of the charge, each business faces maximum penalties of a fine, which shall be not more than the greatest of \$500,000, twice the gross pecuniary gain derived from the offense, or twice the gross pecuniary loss to persons other than the defendant resulting from the offense. If convicted, each business also faces a three-year period of supervised release and a \$400 special assessment.

Acting United States Attorney Sinnott stated that today's charges are the result of an ongoing investigation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to protect the waterways in Wisconsin. Sinnott said those efforts, and this investigation of the illegal importation of bait fish from outside the state will continue. Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter M. Jarosz is handling the prosecution of these cases.

You are advised that a charge is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

#