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United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

News Release

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Minnesota Lake man charged with destroying pelican nests and killing chicks

MINNEAPOLIS—Earlier today in federal court, a 59-year-old man from the southern Minnesota community of Minnesota Lake was charged with one count of violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a misdemeanor.

On May 17, 2011, Craig Louis Staloch allegedly killed and attempted to kill a large number of American white pelicans, which are protected under federal law. On that day, a wildlife specialist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (“DNR”) visited farmland rented by Staloch to assess the status of an area that had been used as a nesting colony by a number of pelicans the previous year. Upon his arrival, he found numerous adult pelicans, many sitting on nests.

On May 18, 2011, that same specialist returned with others to conduct a complete count of the pelicans at the site. However, no adult pelicans were found, and broken eggs were discovered in many of the nests. The eggs appeared to have been smashed with a heavy object. The researchers also found countless dead pelican chicks, some crushed, others dead from abandonment or exposure. There were 1,458 nests in the colony, and the majority of them contained at least two eggs. More than 70 percent of the nests had been destroyed.

If convicted, Staloch faces a potential maximum penalty of six months in prison as well as a fine. This case is the result of an investigation by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the DNR. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin S. Ueland.

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A defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until he or she pleads guilty or is proven guilty at trial.

