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Office of the United States Attorney
Western District of Wisconsin

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STEVENS POINT BAIT FARMER SENTENCED FOR VIOLATING FEDERAL WILDLIFE LAW

Madison, Wis. - Stephen P. Sinnott, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced today that Gollon Brothers Wholesale Live Bait, Inc., of Stevens Point, Wis. was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb to 24 months of probation, which includes special conditions for monitoring the defendant's compliance with state and federal law to help ensure the health of bait fish placed into Wisconsin waterways. In addition, the company was ordered to pay a fine of \$ 4,800, and also to pay the cost of the additional monitoring, which could be as high as \$120,000.

Between January 4, 2007, and continuing until May 14, 2007, Gollon Brothers transported and received bait fish including 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. Gollon Brothers pleaded guilty to the charge on October 29, 2009.

The federal 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 was enacted, in part, to protect the resources of Wisconsin, while allowing for the future growth of the fish farm industry.

As part of the terms of probation, Gollon Brothers will be required to undergo additional testing and monitoring of their facilities and bait fish. These terms include facility inspections, additional imported bait fish testing, prior notification to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources of bait fish imports and exports, and inspections of bait fish shipments into the state. The costs of this monitoring, which could reach as high as \$120,000 during the probationary term, will be born by Gollon Brothers.

In sentencing the defendant, Chief Judge Crabb stated that the special terms of probation were a fair and effective means to ensure the safety of Wisconsin waterways and fish population.

Three other Wisconsin bait farmers convicted for illegally importing bait fish – 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., – were previously sentenced by Judge Crabb to terms of probation, including special conditions for monitoring the defendants' compliance with state and federal law, and were also ordered to pay fines. Gollon Bait & Fish Farm was sentenced to 24 months probation on December 30, 2009, and assessed a \$6,000 fine; Hayward Bait and Tackle and Friesses Minnow Farm were both sentenced on December 31, 2009, to 24 months probation, and ordered to pay fines of \$5,000 and \$4,000 respectively.

United States Attorney Sinnott stated that this case is part of overall efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to protect the Wisconsin waterways. Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter M. Jarosz handled the prosecution of these cases.

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