



Monthly

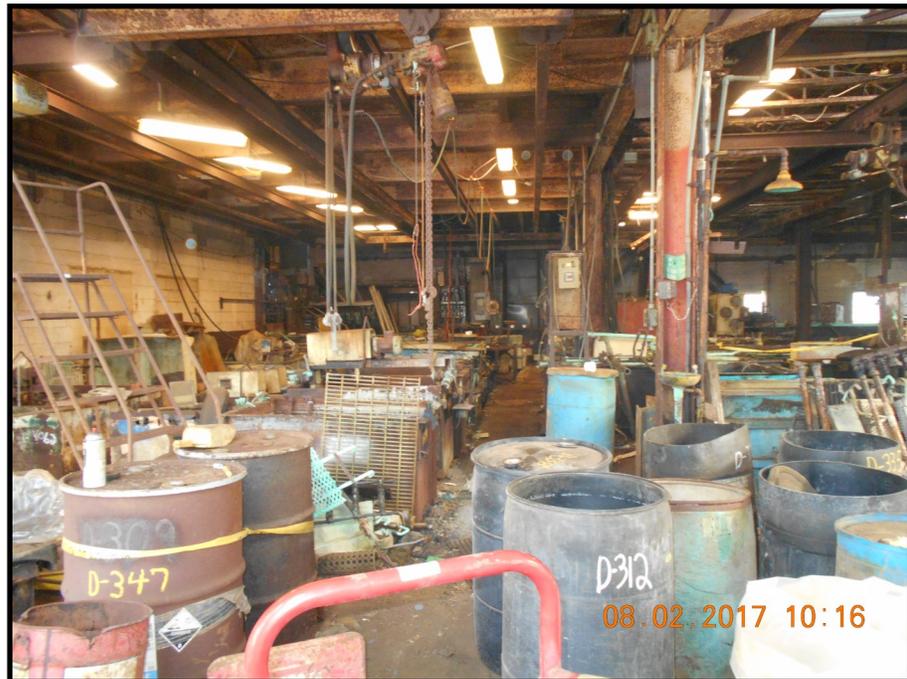
Bulletin

Environmental Crimes Section

December 2019

Inside this Issue:

Trials	3
Indictments	4
Guilty Pleas	5-6
Sentencings	7-16
Announcements	17
ECS Contacts	18



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“This case shows that anyone who chooses to do business with dangerous materials must obey federal laws that protect our fellow Americans and the environment. These defendants’ knowing, illegal storage of waste cyanide, highly corrosive wastes, toxic chromium waste, and reactive wastes posed a significant danger and threat to nearby communities and the environment,” said Assistant Attorney General Jeffrey Bossert Clark for the Justice Department’s Environment and Natural Resources Division. *“They disregarded the law and numerous warnings and requests by state authorities to comply with their legal obligations. The Department of Justice will act to protect public health and safety.”* [From [press release](#) for sentencing of Gary Sayers and Electro-Plating Services. See [inside](#) for more information on this case.]

District/Circuit	Case Name	Case Type/Statutes
Central District of California	United States v. Jose Torres United States v. Bryan Cho	Marine Wildlife Purchase/Lacey Act, Smuggling Monitor Lizard Sales/Smuggling
Eastern District of California	United States v. Matthew P. Gumz	Condor Killing/ESA
District of Delaware	United States v. Chartworld Shipping Corporation et al.	Vessel/ APPS, PWSA
Middle District of Florida	United States v. Chad Ponce	Swordfish Killing/ESA
Southern District of Florida	United States v. Alan F. Wheelock	Turtle Sales/Lacey Act
District of Kansas	United States v. MGP Ingredients, Inc., et al.	Toxic Gas Release/CAA
Western District of Louisiana	United States v. Gilvin P. Aucoin, Jr.	Whooping Crane Killing/MBTA
Eastern District of Michigan	United States v. Electro-Plating Services, Inc. et al.	Waste Storage/RCRA
District of Nebraska	United States v. Rodney L. Owen	Big Game Outfitter/Lacey Act
District of New Jersey	United States v. Danilo Maimone et al.	Vessel/ APPS
Eastern District of New York	United States v. Anchor Frozen Foods, Inc., et al. United States v. Lou's Fish Market, et al.	Seafood Sales/Conspiracy Fish Harvesting/Falsifying Federal Records, Lacey Act, Wire Fraud
Northern District of Ohio	United States v. Brian K. Carder et al.	Worker Death/Obstruction
Southern District of Ohio	United States v. John Riazzi	Building Demolition/CAA
District of Oregon	United States v. Xiao Dong Qin	Turtle Smuggling/Conspiracy
Eastern District of Pennsylvania	United States v. Loren Varga	Tiger Skin Rug/ESA, Lacey Act
Eastern District of Texas	United States v. Eduardo Pineda	Marijuana Cultivation/Drugs

Trials

***United States v. Jose Torres*, No. 2:17-CR-00582 (C.D. Calif.), AUSAs Erik Silber and David Friedman.**

On November 21, 2019, a jury convicted Jose Torres after a three-day trial for smuggling live protected corals, in violation of the Lacey Act (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372(d)(1), 3373(d)(3); 18 U.S.C. § 554). Sentencing is scheduled for February 10, 2020.

In January 2013, a Mexican company called Gabriela Herlinda Medina (GHM) asked to purchase coral from Torres, the owner of Orca International. GHM asked Torres to ship the coral immediately. When Torres attempted to ship the coral from Los Angeles, he falsely declared the boxes contained fish.

Fish and Wildlife Service officials subsequently inspected and seized the cartons, finding coral protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducted the investigation as part of Operation Jungle Book, a law enforcement initiative that targeted wildlife smuggling.

Guilty Pleas

***United States v. Xiao Dong Qin*, No. 6:19-CR-00503 (D. Ore.), AUSA Pamela Paaso.**

On November 26, 2019, Chinese national Xiao Dong Qin pleaded guilty to smuggling more than 300 endangered turtles from the United States to China (U.S.C § 371). Sentencing is scheduled for February 27, 2020.

Between May 2017 and June 2018, Qin directed a co-conspirator to purchase more than 300 protected turtles from reptile dealers in Alabama, California, Florida, Kentucky, Michigan, New Jersey, Nevada, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Investigators recovered 136 Florida box turtles, 76 eastern box turtles, 57 North American wood turtles, 20 spotted turtles, 18 diamondback terrapins, and seven yellow-blotched map turtles. They determined the turtles' market value for the Chinese pet trade exceeded \$250,000.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducted the investigation, with assistance from the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

***United States v. Anchor Frozen Foods, Inc., et al.*, No. 2:18-CR-00522 (E.D.N.Y.), ECS Trial Attorney Ryan Connors and ECS Senior Trial Attorney David Kehoe.**

On November 25, 2019, two companies and two individuals pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud (18 U.S.C. § 371). Sentencing is scheduled for May 19, 2020.

Roy Tuccillo, Sr., and his son, Roy Tuccillo, Jr., own and manage multiple food processing and distribution companies on Long Island, including Anchor Frozen Foods, Inc. and Advanced Frozen Foods, Inc. They repeatedly imported giant squid from Peru and sold it as "octopus" to grocery stores across the country. They solicited business and processed payments by email and wire transfers while carrying out their scheme to defraud grocery stores and customers.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Law Enforcement conducted the investigation, with assistance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.



Eastern Box Turtle

Guilty Pleas

United States v. MGP Ingredients, Inc., et al., No. 5:19-CR-40021 (D. Kansas), AUSA Rich Hathaway.

On November 18, 2019, MGP Ingredients, Inc., pleaded guilty to violating the Clean Air Act (CAA) for discharging harmful chemicals (42 U.S.C. § 7413(c)(4)). Sentencing is scheduled for January 27, 2020.

Harcros Chemicals is a subsidiary of MGP Ingredients, Inc., (MGPI). Harcros manufactures and distributes industrial chemicals throughout the United States. It specifically provides sulfuric acid, sodium hydroxide, sodium hypochlorite and propylene oxide to MGPI, which it uses for processing specialty wheat proteins and starches into food grade alcohol.

On October 21, 2016, a Harcros driver delivered a load of sulfuric acid to MGPI's facility in Atchison, Kansas. An MGPI operator helped the driver access the transfer equipment. A greenish-yellow chlorine gas cloud formed when the employees mistakenly combined 4,000 gallons of sulfuric acid with 5,800 gallons of sodium hypochlorite. This toxic cloud covered the city for close to an hour until emergency personnel arrived. Local officials ordered community members to shelter in place and evacuate in some areas. Approximately 140 individuals sought medical attention.

Prosecutors charged Harcros with violating the CAA. A plea hearing is scheduled for January 17, 2020.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division conducted the investigation.

United States v. Chad Ponce, No. 3:19-CR-00082 (M.D. Fla.), AUSA Jay Taylor.

On November 1, 2019, Chad Ponce pleaded guilty to violating the Endangered Species Act for killing a sawfish (16 U.S.C. §§ 1538, 1540).

In July 2018, an individual tipped off a local sheriff's office that someone aboard the shrimping trawler *Triton II* cut the rostrum from a live sawfish off the coast of Ponte Vedra, Florida. Local wildlife officers contacted Ponce, the owner and captain of the vessel. After conducting a search, Ponce admitted to inadvertently catching a sawfish in his nets, but claimed he released the fish unharmed into the water. The search did not produce a sawfish, but officers observed several power saws on board.

Officials with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration located several eyewitnesses, including one who used a cellphone to videotape the capture and decking of the sawfish. Measuring 12 to 14 feet long, the fish was trapped in the vessel's netting and hauled onto the *Triton II* deck. The captain of the filming boat asked Ponce if the fish was a sawfish, to which Ponce replied yes. Eyewitnesses observed Ponce retrieving a saw and using it to remove the rostrum from the live fish. Ponce then tossed the fish overboard.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Florida Wildlife Commission conducted the investigation.



Triton II

Sentencings

United States v. Lou's Fish Market et al., No. 2:15-CR-00278 (E.D.N.Y.), ECS Trial Attorney Christopher Hale.

On November 21, 2019, a court sentenced Lou's Fish Market and company owner, Mark Parente. Parente will complete a five-year term of probation to include six months' home confinement. Parente will pay a \$50,000 fine, make a community service payment of \$10,000 and \$481,000 in restitution. He also will surrender his dealer license and state permit. Lou's will pay a \$400,000 fine, \$100,000 in community service, complete a three-year term of probation and implement an environmental compliance plan.

This federally-licensed fish dealer and owner previously pleaded guilty to charges stemming from their role in systematically covering up illegal purchases of fluke (summer flounder), scup, and black sea bass harvested in violation of the federal Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program.

Two trawlers utilized the RSA Program as a mask for unlawful quota overages. In order to conceal the fishermen's illicit catch, Parente directed unwitting company personnel to prepare close to 80 false dealer reports sent to fisheries authorities. These reports omitted or misidentified approximately 200,000 pounds of fluke, 50,000 pounds of scup, and 12,000 pounds of black sea bass. Authorities stipulated the wholesale value of the fish at \$480,000.

Lou's Fish Market pleaded guilty to falsifying federal records and Lacey Act false labeling for the knowing use of false documents. Parente pleaded guilty to wire fraud, aiding and abetting mail fraud, and falsifying federal records (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372(d)(2), 3373(d)(3)(A); 18 U.S.C. §§ 1341, 1343, 1519).

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service conducted the investigation.

United States v. Matthew P. Gumz, No. 5:17-mj-00028 (E.D. Calif.), AUSA Laurel Jackson Montoya.

On November 21, 2019, a court sentenced Matthew P. Gumz to pay a \$2,000 fine and complete an 18-month term of probation. Gumz also will pay \$12,421 in restitution to the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Foundation. Gumz previously pleaded guilty to violating the Endangered Species Act for taking a California condor (16 U.S.C. § 1538(a)(1)(B)).

In October 2016, an anonymous person contacted the California Department of Fish and Wildlife concerning the death of a male juvenile California condor. Authorities located the bird, designated as Condor 780, on federal land. Condor 780 had a large distinctive green tag on its left wing with "80" printed on it in large white numbers.



Condor 780

(Continued on page 8)

Sentencings

(Continued from page 7)

In September 2016, Gumz hunted deer in the Bean Canyon area, which is managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Gumz field dressed a deer, hung it in a tree, and left. When he returned to the area, he saw condors and other birds near the carcass and shot and killed Condor 780.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife conducted this investigation.

[REDACTED]

United States v. John Riazzi, No. 3:19-CR-00082 (S.D. Ohio), ECS Trial Attorney Adam Cullman and AUSA Laura Clemmens.

On November 19, 2019, a court sentenced John Riazzi to pay a \$40,000 fine, complete a two-year term of probation, perform 20 hours' community service, and pay \$1,896 in restitution. Riazzi previously pleaded guilty to violating the Clean Air Act for illegally removing asbestos-containing roofing material from a building in downtown Dayton (known as the "Steam Plant")(42 U.S.C. § 7413(c) (1)).

In September 2015, Riazzi, the sole owner and operator of St. Peters Partners LLC, purchased the Steam Plant from the City of Dayton for \$10. After his contractor informed him that the building's roof contained asbestos



Roofing material

(Continued on page 9)

Sentencings

(Continued from page 8)

(costing \$20,000 to remove), Riazzi hired two men to do the job for \$5,000, without warning them about the asbestos.

Riazzi used a leaf blower to blow roofing debris from the outside of the Steam Plant onto the asphalt, and dumped a load of roofing material across the street. He also made several false statements to local investigators about the dumping. Riazzi will pay the restitution to one of the workers who removed the roof.

The U.S. EPA Criminal Investigation Division, and the Ohio Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigations, conducted the investigation, with assistance from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

United States v. Bryan Cho, No. 2:17-CR-00691 (C.D. Calif.), AUSA Amanda Bettinelli.

On November 13, 2019, a court sentenced Bryan Cho to 30 days' incarceration, and 120 days' home confinement, as a condition of two years' supervised release. Cho previously pleaded guilty to smuggling reptiles from the Philippines to Long Beach, California (18 U.S.C. § 545).

In October 2016, Cho received a package containing five monitor lizards concealed inside stereo equipment. Federal agents intercepted and opened the package, saw the lizards, and arranged for it to be delivered. Agents subsequently went to Cho's business (JTK's Reptiles) and observed what appeared to be the same species of lizards in the store. Further investigation confirmed Cho lacked the required licenses or permits.

In May 2017, Cho's business received another package from the Philippines labelled as "Toy Cars." Cho accepted approximately three shipments of monitor lizards from the Philippines that had been mislabeled and/or concealed inside other objects.

This case is a result of Operation Jungle Book, a law enforcement initiative led by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service targeting wildlife smuggling.



Monitor Lizard

Sentencings

***United States v. Loren Varga*, No. 2:19-CR-00360 (E.D. Penn.), AUSA Nancy Winter, with assistance from ECS Trial Attorney Ryan Connors.**

On November 13, 2019, a court sentenced Loren Varga to one day of incarceration, followed by two years' supervised release, and to pay a \$1,500 fine for illegally purchasing a tiger skin rug. Varga previously pleaded guilty to violating the Lacey Act and the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. §§ 1538(a)(1), 1540(b)(1); 3373(a)(1), 3373(a)(1)(B)).

Varga traveled from New Jersey to Pennsylvania to purchase a tiger skin rug from an undercover agent. Nearly 20 years earlier, Varga attempted to buy a similar rug. Wildlife agents warned him then that it was illegal to do so. Undeterred, Varga again sought to purchase one in 2018. After wildlife agents received a tip, they arranged a sting operation leading to this prosecution.



Tiger skin rug

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducted this investigation, with assistance from authorities in the United Kingdom.

***United States v. Eduardo Pineda*, No. 6:17-CR-00039 (E.D. Tex.), AUSAs Nathaniel C. Kummerfeld, Lucas Machicek, and Ryan Locker.**

On November 12, 2019, a court sentenced Eduardo Pineda to nine years' incarceration, followed by four years' supervised release, for manufacturing and distributing marijuana on public lands (21 U.S.C. § 841).

In 2016, Pineda supervised a large-scale marijuana cultivation enterprise throughout Texas, including on public lands such as Davy Crockett and Sabine National Forests. The defendant and co-conspirators also grew marijuana on private property without the knowledge or consent of the landowners. Pineda helped to cultivate thousands of plants.

The Texas Department of Public Safety Criminal Investigations Division; Texas Department of Public Safety Highway Patrol; Drug Enforcement Administration; Smith County Sheriff's Office; Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; U.S. Forest Service; U.S. Army National Guard; Texas Parks and Wildlife; Sabine County Sheriff's Office; Henderson County Sheriff's Office; Harrison County Sheriff's Office; Anderson County Sheriff's Office; Upshur County Sheriff's Office; Houston County Sheriff's Office; Morris County Sheriff's Office; Longview Police Department; and Gilmer Police Department conducted this investigation.

Sentencings

***United States v. Chartworld Shipping Corporation et al.*, No. 19-CR-00058 (D. Del.), ECS Senior Trial Attorney David Kehoe, ECS Trial Attorney Steve DaPonte, AUSA Edmund Falgowski, and ECS Law Clerk Nate Borrelli.**

On November 8, 2019, a court sentenced Chief Engineer Vasileios Mazarakis to complete a one-year term of probation, after previously pleading guilty to violating the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships (APPS) (33 U.S.C. § 1908). Chartworld (Chartworld) Shipping Corporation and Nederland Shipping Corporation were each ordered to pay \$900,000 fines and complete four-year terms' of probation. Chartworld also will implement an environmental compliance plan. The companies pleaded guilty to violating APPS and the Ports and Waterways Safety Act (46 U.S.C. § 70036(b)(1)).

Nederland owned the *M/V Nederland Reefer* and Chartworld managed the vessel. The ship entered the Port of Delaware Bay in February 2019 with a false Oil Record Book (ORB) available for inspection by the U.S. Coast Guard. The ORB failed to accurately record transfers and discharges of oily wastewater on the vessel.

The companies also did not report a hazardous condition to the Coast Guard. A breach in the vessel's hull allowed seawater to leak into the bilge holding tank.

The U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service conducted the investigation.

***United States v. Alan F. Wheelock*, No. 1:19-CR-20837 (S.D. Fla.), AUSA Tom Watts-FitzGerald.**

On November 7, 2019, a court sentenced Alan F. Wheelock to pay a \$7,000 fine, and complete a two-year term of probation to include four months' home detention. Wheelock also will perform 100 hours of community service. He pleaded guilty to violating the Lacey Act for buying a Galapagos tortoise (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372 (a)(1), 3373 (d)(1)(B)).

In August 2018, Wheelock visited a public internet site for reptile enthusiasts. He responded to an advertisement posted by a licensed breeder, offering "Galapagos Hatchlings" for sale. The site also posted the following warning: "A CBW [Captive-Bred Wildlife Registration Permit] is required if you are outside Florida - Valid proof will be required . . ."

Wheelock contacted his cousin, Mauricio Perez, asking him to contact the breeder, pose as an in-state buyer, and acquire a baby Galapagos tortoise to be shipped via FedEx to Wheelock in Las Vegas. Wheelock offered Perez \$400 to drive to the breeder's facility in central Florida. Wheelock subsequently wired \$4,500 into Perez's bank account.

On August 25, 2018, Perez withdrew \$4,300 and met with the breeder, paying \$3,900 for the turtle. While at the breeder's facility, Perez posted video clips to his Facebook account that included juvenile Galapagos tortoises. On August 27, 2018, video



Juvenile Galapagos tortoise

(Continued on page 12)

Sentencings

(Continued from page 11)

cameras captured Perez presenting the box containing the Galapagos tortoise to the FedEx facility in Miami and paying to have the package sent to Wheelock. A canine alerted a store inspector to the package containing the reptile enroute to Wheelock in Las Vegas. Wheelock received the package the following day in Las Vegas, with the entire transaction captured on videotape.

Authorities took possession of the tortoise and returned it to Florida. Prosecutors dismissed charges against Perez following his death.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, conducted the investigation, with assistance from the Fish Wildlife Service's National Forensic Laboratory.

[REDACTED]

United States v. Brian K. Carder et al., No. 4:18-CR-00628 (N.D. Ohio), AUSAs Carmen E. Henderson and Om M. Kakani.

On November 6, 2019, a court sentenced Brian Carder to pay a \$20,000 fine and complete a three-year term of probation to include 20 days' intermittent custody and two months' home confinement. A court previously ordered co-defendant Paul Love to pay a \$1,000 fine and complete a three-year term of probation to include three months' home confinement. Carder and Love pleaded guilty to conspiracy to obstruct an investigation following a workplace death (18 U.S.C. §§ 1512(k)).

Carder worked as the general manager at Extrudex Aluminum, an aluminum extrusion manufacturing company. Love was the company's safety coordinator and human resources director. Aluminum alloy is transformed into using aluminum extrusion. with Part of this process included the conveyance of extruded aluminum pieces through a long, walk-in, tunnel-style oven. Employees routinely loaded and unloaded the oven by pushing racks of aluminum into and out of the oven on a roller conveyor system (referred to as the racks and rollers system.)

(Continued on page 13)

Sentencings

(Continued from page 12)

In December 2009, Carder emailed employees, including Love, regarding maintenance and safety issues with the racks and rollers system. Carder stated that the system was “in need of dire attention” and it “must be a priority or someone is going to get seriously hurt.” Between November 2011 and October 2012, the defendants and employees exchanged a series of emails about the safety of the racks and rollers system.

On October 30, 2012, two metal racks holding hot aluminum product weighing an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 pounds fell on top of two employees killing one and severely burning the other.

After the Occupational Safety and Health Administration initiated an investigation, the defendants undertook a number of actions to thwart authorities. They withheld emails, gave false statements to investigators, and took steps to persuade employees to recant their earlier statements, suggesting that their jobs may be in jeopardy if they did not.

The U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General conducted the investigation.

United States v. Electro-Plating Services, Inc., et al., No. 2:19-CR-20016 (E.D. Mich.), ECS Senior Counsel Kris Dighe and AUSA Sara Woodward.

On November 5, 2019, a court sentenced Electro-Plating Services, Inc., to complete a five-year term of probation, and pay \$1,449,964 in restitution to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for clean-up costs. Company owner Gary Sayers will serve 12 month’s incarceration, followed by three years of supervised release. He also is jointly and severally responsible for the restitution. The defendants previously pleaded guilty to violating the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act for illegally storing wastes at the company’s premises in Madison Heights, Michigan (42 U.S.C. § 6928(d)(2)(A)).



Chemicals stored illegally

Sayers owned this electroplating business since the late 1990s and stored most of the wastes onsite. He also stored hazardous wastes at the Detroit facility, where local environmental authorities repeatedly warned him that it was illegal to do so. Sayers pleaded guilty in 2005 to state hazardous waste transportation violations. During the ensuing years, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) issued numerous Letters of Warning and Violation Notices to the company and Sayers, without effect.

In 2016, MDEQ identified more than 5,000 containers of liquid and solid wastes at the Madison Heights location. That same year, the City of Madison Heights revoked the

(Continued on page 14)

Sentencings

(Continued from page 13)

company's occupancy permit. In January 2017, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency initiated a Superfund removal action that took a year to complete.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality conducted this investigation.

United States v. Danilo Maimone et al. Nos. 19-CR-00284 (D.N.J.), former ECS Trial Attorney John Cashman and AUSA Kathleen O' Leary.

On November 5, 2019, a court sentenced first assistant engineer Danilo Maimone to complete a two-year term of probation. Maimone previously pleaded guilty to obstructing justice, and ship owner d'Amico Shipping Italia S.p.A. (DSI) pleaded guilty to violating the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships for the illegal dumping of oily bilge wastes from the *M/T Cielo di Milano* (33 U.S.C. § 1908(a)).

Between August 2014 and January 2015, DSI failed to maintain an accurate oil record book (ORB) regarding oily waste discharges from the vessel. The crew presented this falsified ORB to Coast Guard inspectors in January 2015 during a port call in New Jersey. They made numerous overboard discharges of oily wastes without the use of a properly functioning oil water separator or oil monitoring equipment.

Maimone admitted to concealing the discharge of oily waste, as well as causing the false ORB to be presented to the Coast Guard during the inspection. He made false statements and instructed lower-level crewmembers to do the same.

The company was ordered to pay a \$3 million fine, make a \$1 million community service payment to the National Fish and Wildlife Fund, and complete a four-year term of probation to include implementing an environmental compliance plan. Chief engineer Girolamo Curatolo was sentenced to eight months' incarceration, followed by one year of supervised release, and ordered to pay a \$5,000 fine.

The U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service conducted the investigation.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sentencings

United States v. Rodney L. Owen, No. 8:19-CR-00218 (D. Neb.), AUSA Donald L. Kleine.

On November 1, 2019, a court sentenced Rodney L. Owen to pay a \$25,000 fine and complete a five-year term of probation for violating the Lacey Act (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372(a)(2)(A), 3373(d)(2)). Owen also will pay \$25,000 in restitution to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Between 2015 and 2017, Owen conducted wildlife hunts for Hidden Hills Outfitters (HHO), a commercial big game guiding and outfitting business. During the hunts, Owen and HHO owners and employees knew various hunting locations were baited. Under Nebraska state law, it is illegal to hunt within 200 yards of bait.

Over this three-year period, Owen hunted or took record-book trophy deer within baited areas that HHO managed, and illegally transported the animals from Nebraska to Missouri.

He and others submitted video from some of these hunts for airing on Drury Outdoors television shows. Drury decided to feature two of Owen's hunts on Drury Outdoors Dream Seasons 13 and 14. As part of a negotiated payment, HHO only charged Owen half the standard rate in exchange for Owen promoting the company on the video submitted for commercial production.

To date, 19 defendants have pleaded guilty and paid a total of \$101,700 in fines and restitution for their involvement in illegal hunting. The investigation is ongoing.

While under probation, Owen may not hunt, trap, or have any involvement in those activities.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Law Enforcement Division conducted this investigation.



Defendant posting illegal kill on Instagram

Sentencings

United States v. Gilvin P. Aucoin, Jr., No. 6:19-CR-00254 (W.D. La.), AUSA Danny Siefker.

On November 1, 2019, a court sentenced Gilvin P. Aucoin, Jr., for killing a whooping crane. Aucoin will complete a two-year term of probation, and perform 120 hours of community service related to environmental conservation. He also must complete a hunter's education course and cannot hunt or fish during the period of probation.

Aucoin pleaded guilty to violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act after he shot and killed a whooping crane in July 2018 (16 U.S.C. §§ 703, 707(a)). Aucoin saw the bird while working on a farm and shot at it multiple times using his rifle with a scope. He ultimately killed the whooping crane, leaving the bird where it fell.

Whooping cranes are among the world's most endangered birds. About 850 are alive, with about 660 of them in the wild

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries conducted the investigation.



Whooping Crane

Announcements

When submitting a press release for posting with the Executive Office of U.S. Attorneys <https://www.justice.gov/usao/pressreleases>, please be sure it is tagged for the “Environment/Wildlife” topic. This will help ensure that your case is not overlooked for reporting in the Bulletin.

News from state, local, and Canadian cases is posted on the Regional Environmental Enforcement Associations [website](#) .

Please send [REDACTED] any pleadings you believe would be useful for posting in the [Brief Bank](#).

If you are in need of sentencing data for your wildlife or pollution cases, please contact [REDACTED] with your search requests.

Please notify ECS of any appeals taken in your cases, as per [Section 5-11.118](#) of the U.S. Attorneys’ Manual.

A public version of the [Bulletin](#) is available for non-law enforcement readers.

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Senior Trial Attorney	Ken Nelson	
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Trial Attorney	Adam Cullman	
Trial Attorney	Stephen DaPonte	
Trial Attorney	Gary Donner	
Trial Attorney	Patrick Duggan	
Trial Attorney	Ethan Eddy	
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Trial Attorney	Stephen Foster	
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Trial Attorney	Joel LaBissonniere	
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Trial Attorney	Richard Powers	
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