



Monthly

Bulletin

Environmental Crimes Section

November 2020

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to: [REDACTED]



The photo above depicts unlawfully-taken wildlife trophies seized and forfeited or abandoned by Hidden Hills Outfitters and clients. See *U.S. v. Hidden Hills Outfitters, et al.*, [below](#), for more details on this case, referred to as the “largest poaching case in Nebraska history.”

District/Circuit	Case Name	Case Type/Statutes
District of Alaska	<u>United States v. Robert J. Albaugh</u>	Subsistence Hunting Fraud/ Lacey Act
Eastern District of California	<u>United States v. Juan Agustin Santiago Bentanzos et al.</u>	Marijuana Cultivation/ Drug, Depredation of Public Lands, Firearms
Northern District of California	<u>United States v. Keri Zhang Wang</u>	Turtle Sales/Lacey Act, Smuggling
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District of Hawaii	<u>United States v. Hamada Suisan Co., Ltd., et al.</u>	Shark Finning/Lacey Act
Northern District of Indiana	<u>United States v. Cai Feng Yang</u>	Pesticide Usage/FIFRA
Eastern District of Kentucky	<u>United States v. Aaron M. Jamison et al.</u>	Remediation Company/ Conspiracy, Mail Fraud, RCRA, Theft from Employee Benefits Plan
District of Massachusetts	<u>United States v. Nathan Boss</u>	Reptile Sales/False State, Smuggling
District of Montana	<u>United States v. James K. Ward</u>	Radioactive Waste Disposal/ Wire Fraud

District/Circuit	Case Name	Case Type/Statutes
District of Nebraska	<u>United States v. Hidden Hills Outfitters, LLC, et al.</u>	Hunting/Conspiracy
Eastern District of North Carolina	<u>United States v. Wenguang Ye</u>	Vessel/ APPS
Western District of North Carolina	<u>United States v. David S. Lutz</u>	Municipal Employee/RCRA
Southern District of Ohio	 <u>United States v. Cin-Air, LP</u>	 Fuel Spill/CWA
District of Oregon	<u>United States v. Valley Crest Foods</u>	Wastewater Discharge/CWA
Middle District of Pennsylvania	<u>United States v. David D. Klepadlo et al.</u> <u>United States v. Keystone Biofuels, Inc., et al.</u>	Wastewater Management/ CWA, Tampering with a Witness Biodiesel Fraud/Conspiracy, False Statement, Tax
District of Puerto Rico	<u>United States v. Juan Pablo Castro Torres</u>	Coral Sales/Lacey Act
		
Western District of Texas	<u>United States v. Harry George Bock, II, et al.</u>	Cacti Sales/Lacey Act
Western District of Wisconsin	<u>United States v. Kevin Shibilski</u> <u>United States v. Chang Xiong</u>	E-Waste/Conspiracy, RCRA, Tax Wildlife Sales/Lacey Act

Indictments/Informations

***United States v. Kevin Shibilski*, No. 3:20-CR-00122 (W.D. Wisc.), AUSA Daniel Graber and RCEC James Cha.**

On October 22, 2020, prosecutors filed a ten-count superseding indictment charging Kevin Shibilski with charges related to a fraudulent e-waste recycling scheme (42 U.S.C. § 6928; 18 U.S.C. §§ 371, 1343).

Shibilski was the Chief Executive Officer of 5R Processors, Ltd., a Wisconsin company involved in the recycling of electronic waste from corporate and institutional clients as well as from manufacturers that participate in a manufacture-take-back program. Shibilski illegally stored and disposed of broken and crushed glass from cathode ray tubes (CRT) contaminated with lead in Wisconsin and Tennessee.

Shibilski committed wire fraud by taking more than \$5.76 million from clients who paid him to recycle more than 8.3 million pounds of crushed CRT glass. He further conspired to defraud the United States by evading the payment of approximately \$850,000 in employment and income taxes for 5R Processors.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Law Enforcement conducted the investigation.

***United States v. Chang Xiong*, No. 3:20-CR-00138 (W.D. Wisc.), AUSA Dan Graber.**

On October 22, 2020, prosecutors charged Chang Xiong with violating the Lacey Act for purchasing wildlife transported in violation of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 3372(a)(1), 3373(d)(1)(B)).

On three separate occasions in July 2016, September 2017, and December 2018, Xiong purchased rhinoceros feet. Trial is scheduled for May 24, 2021.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducted the investigation.

***United States v. Robert J. Albaugh*, No. 4:20-CR-00012 (D. Alaska), AUSA Ryan Tansey.**

On October 15, 2020, prosecutors filed a 32-count Information charging Robert J. Albaugh with violations stemming from illegal hunting and transporting wildlife over a 16-year period (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372(a)(1), 3373(d)(2); 43 U.S.C. § 1733(a)).

Between 2002 and 2018, Albaugh and his wife received a total of 63 Federal Subsistence Hunt permits. They took 23 caribou and a moose pursuant to those permits by falsely claiming rural resident status to take unfair advantage of federal regulations that support subsistence programs in rural Alaska.

The Federal Subsistence Management Program (FSMP) supports rural Alaskans who hunt and fish for subsistence. The program allows participants to use public lands and waters while maintaining healthy populations of fish and wildlife. Subsistence fishing and hunting provide a large share of the food consumed in rural Alaska. Alaska's indigenous inhabitants rely heavily upon the traditional harvest of wild foods; more and more non-

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Indictments/Informations

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Native Alaskans rely upon it as well in rural Alaska.

The Bureau of Land Management Office of Law Enforcement and Security conducted the investigation, with assistance from Alaska Wildlife Troopers.

[REDACTED]

***United States v. David S. Lutz*, No. 1:20-CR-00094 (W.D.N.C.), AUSA Steven Kaufman.**

On September 17, 2020, prosecutors charged David S. Lutz with violating the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act for illegally disposing of hazardous wastes (42 U.S.C. §§ 6928 (d)(5), (d)(2)(A), (d)(1)). Trial is scheduled for the January 4, 2021, term.

In early May 2016, Lutz, the Director of Public Works (DPW) for the City of Brevard (Brevard), directed employees to dig up lead-contaminated soil from Brevard's firing range, without using any employing proper safeguards of protective equipment. He directed city employees to transport the contaminated soil in city-owned vehicles, without hazardous waste manifests, to store at the DPW Operations Center. The Center was not permitted to treat, store or dispose of hazardous waste.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division and the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation conducted the investigation.

Guilty Pleas

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sentencings

***United States v. Juan Pablo Castro Torres*, No. 20-CR-00234 (D. P. R.), ECS Trial Attorney Christopher Hale and AUSA Carmen Marquez.**

On October 28, 2020, the court sentenced Juan Pablo Castro Torres to pay a \$10,000 fine (divided between the NOAA Asset Forfeiture Fund and the Lacey Act Reward Fund), complete a five-year term of probation, and perform 400 hours of community service. The court banned Castro from any involvement in the marine wildlife business during the term of probation. Castro previously pleaded guilty to violating the Lacey Act for collecting, falsely labeling, and shipping protected corals and other reef species (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372(a)(2)(A), 3373(d)(1)(B), (d)(3)(A)).

Castro worked as a supplier for the aquarium business, collecting illegally harvested marine invertebrates taken from the waters of Puerto Rico. Castro provided those animals to Aristides Sanchez, an aquarium business owner, who sold them to customers in the mainland United States. Sanchez previously pleaded guilty and currently awaits sentencing. On behalf of Sanchez, Castro also falsely labeled packages to hide the fact that the shipments contained marine species.

Castro knew that one of the most popular items Sanchez sent off-island was a coral-like organism from the genus *Ricordea*. These animals are known as “rics,” “polyps,” or “mushrooms” in the aquarium industry, and spend their adult lives fastened to reefs. These animals are particularly interesting to aquarium owners since they “glow” under the UV lights typically used in high-end saltwater aquariums.

Castro knew that harvesting *Ricordea*, zoanthids, and anemones in Puerto Rico for commercial purposes was illegal. He personally collected some of the *Ricordea* and other reef creatures that Sanchez sold off-island. The fair market retail value of the wildlife directly attributable to Castro was between \$14,000 and \$15,000.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration conducted the investigation.

***United States v. David D. Klepadlo et al.*, No. 3:16-CR-00254 (M.D. Pa.), AUSA Michelle Olshefski, SAUSA Martin Harrell, and SAUSA Patricia Miller.**

On October 28, 2020, a court sentenced David D. Klepadlo and David D. Klepadlo & Associates, Inc., for violating the Clean Water Act (CWA) and tampering with a government witness (33 U.S.C. §§ 1319(c)(4); 18 U.S.C. § 1512(c)(2)). Klepadlo was sentenced to time-served, followed by three years’ supervised release, to include one year of home confinement. His company will complete a five-year term of probation and pay a \$10,000 fine. The judge made it clear during the 90-minute socially-distanced hearing that Klepadlo’s age (66), his various heart and other medical issues, and the pandemic drove his decision not to impose a prison term as requested by the government. For a variety of reasons, the court postponed the sentencing hearing for more than a year.

Klepadlo, a Professional Engineer with decades of experience, was a licensed waste water treatment plant operator. He and his engineering company contracted with local municipalities in northeast Pennsylvania to operate and manage their waste water treatment plants. Between May 2012 and June 2014, the defendants failed to properly operate and maintain multiple facilities, by, among other things: failing to take daily and

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Sentencings

(Continued from page 8)

weekly discharge samples, generating reports containing falsified data, and submitting those reports to local and federal environmental officials. Klepadlo admitted to local and federal authorities that he did not need to do required daily sampling because it was a waste of time. Video surveillance over six months showed that the defendants failed to come to one plant for 116 days, but Klepadlo still submitted daily sample results for this plant.

The facilities identified in the indictment are the Greenfield Township Sewer Authority and the Benton/Nicholson Sewer Authority. Waste water from the Greenfield Publically Owned Treatment Works discharged into a tributary of Dundaff Creek, which flows into Tunkhannock Creek, and into the Susquehanna River. Waste water from the Benton/Nicholson facility entered a tributary of South Branch Tunkhannock Creek, which also flows into the Susquehanna. Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection authorities confirmed both streams as fisheries habitat.

Klepadlo attempted to persuade his employee (a government witness) to fabricate a false explanation for the CWA violations. Cooperating with investigators, the employee recorded multiple conversations between himself and Klepadlo. The defendant advised his employee to tell investigators a retired state environmental inspector instructed them on the procedure they followed.

The original trial judge (who died early in 2020) issued an opinion that Section 2Q1.2 was the applicable guideline, rejecting Klepadlo's arguments that Section 2Q1.3 applies in most if not all CWA cases. The trial attorneys extensively briefed this issue.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation conducted the investigation.

***United States v. Cai Feng Yang*, No. 20-CR-00040 (N.D. Ind.), ECS Trial Attorney Rich Powers and AUSA Toi Houston.**

On October 27, 2020, a court sentenced Chinese national Cai Feng Yang to pay a \$3,000 fine, and complete an 18 month-term of probation, to include six months' home confinement. Yang pleaded guilty to violating the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. §§ 136j(a)(1)(A), 136l(b)(1)(B)).

During two trips to China (in September 2015 and January 2016) Yang purchased vials of granular cockroach killer bait containing the active ingredient fipronil, syringes of gel Siege cockroach gum bait containing the active ingredient mirex, and bottles of liquid pesticide containing the active ingredient dichlorvos. None of these pesticides are registered with the Environmental Protection Agency. Yang traveled back to the United States with the pesticides in his luggage for his tenants and an employee to use to control cockroaches and bed bugs in apartments he owned and managed.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division conducted the investigation, with assistance from the Office of Indiana State Chemist.

November 2020

Sentencings

United States v. Keystone Biofuels, Inc., et al. Nos. 1:17-CR-00143, 1:18-CR-00278 (M.D. Pa.), ECS Senior Litigation Counsel Howard Stewart, AUSA Geoffrey W. MacArthur, Tax Division Attorney Mark Kotila, ECS Law Clerk Amanda Backer, and ECS Paralegal John Jones.

On October 20, 2020, a court sentenced Ben Wootton to 70 months and Race Miner to 66 months of incarceration, followed by three years' supervised release. A jury convicted them, along with Keystone Biofuels, in April 2019, of conspiring to make false statements to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and substantive false statements, in addition to conspiring to defraud the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and creating fraudulent tax records (18 U.S.C. §§ 371, 1001, 26 U.S.C. § 7206). The court sentenced the company to complete a five-year term of probation and held all three defendants responsible for paying \$4,149,383 in restitution to the IRS, plus \$5,076,376 to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Wootton and Miner co-owned and operated Keystone, which purported to produce and sell biodiesel. Between August 2009 and September 2013, Wootton and Miner conspired to fraudulently generate renewable fuel credits, identified by renewable identification numbers (RINs) on Keystone fuel. They also fraudulently claimed tax refunds based on the Biodiesel Mixture Tax Credit through January 2012.

As part of the conspiracy, Wootton and Miner caused others to report inflated fuel amounts to the IRS. The inflated fuel numbers supported their fraudulent claims for tax refunds on fuel Keystone was not producing. To account for the inflated fuel amounts, they created false books and records and engaged in a series of sham financial transactions intended to mirror the false books and records. In addition, Miner doctored fuel samples and test results to fraudulently claim tax refunds and RINs on fuel that did not meet the requisite quality standards to qualify for them. They generated more than \$10 million from the fraudulent RIN sales.

David Tielle, director of business development, pleaded guilty to conspiring to defraud the IRS. A court sentenced him to complete a three-year term probation, to include three months' home detention, and held him jointly responsible for the \$4,149, 983 in restitution to the IRS.

IRS Criminal Investigation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division conducted this investigation.

Sentencings

United States v. Harry George Bock, II, et al., No. 4:20-CR-00252 (W.D. Tex.), AUSA James J. Miller, Jr.

On October 19, 2020, a court sentenced Harry George Bock, II, to complete a three-year term of probation, pay a \$5,500 fine, and \$7,200 in restitution (to be split between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and Homeland Security Investigations). Bock also will forfeit 41 cacti.

Bock is the sixth and final defendant sentenced in this investigation involving trafficking in protected living rock cacti to sell to buyers in Europe and Asia (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372(d), 3373(d)(3)(A)).

In 2012, the FWS uncovered a substantial trafficking ring engaged in smuggling thousands of protected living rock cacti from the Big Bend region of Western Texas to customers around the globe. Cooperative investigative work led to agents executing six residential search warrants served mostly in remote southwest Texas. Individuals advertised the sale of living rock cacti with many buyers in Europe and Asia. Authorities arrested a number of people after intercepting multiple falsely labelled parcels at international mail facilities.

Thousands of cacti seized by law enforcement during this investigation were cared for and donated to non-profit entities through assistance from the Sul Ross State University.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement and Homeland Security



Living rock cacti

United States v. Keri Zhang Wang, No. 5:19-CR-00523 (N.D. Calif.), AUSA Maia Perez, with assistance from ECS Trial Attorney Ryan Connors.

On October 13, 2020, a court sentenced Keri Zhang Wang to 100 days' incarceration, followed by three years' supervised release. Wang also will pay a \$4,000 fine, and forfeit \$41,753, after pleading guilty to smuggling wildlife from the United States and violating the Lacey Act (18 U.S.C. § 554; 16 U.S.C. §§ 3372(d)(2), 3373(d)(3)(A)).

Between September 2016 and June 2019, Wang smuggled approximately 11 packages containing endangered Eastern, Three-Toed, and Ornate box turtles. The Chinese prize them for the pet trade market. Wang labeled the packages as snacks, toys, and crystal balls to deter customs authorities. For shipping from California to Hong Kong, she stuffed the turtles into socks that went inside shoeboxes concealed beneath bags of snacks. Law enforcement saved 59 turtles after intercepting these packages, but evidence suggests Wang successfully sent between 60 and 70 additional packages to China.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement conducted the investigation.



Turtle shipped by Wang

Sentencings

***United States v. Wenguang Ye*, No. 4:20-CR-00036 (E.D.N.C.), ECS Senior Trial Attorney Ken Nelson, AUSA Banu Rangarajan, and ECS Paralegal John Jones.**

On October 13, 2020, a court sentenced Wenguang Ye to pay a \$5,500 fine and complete a one-year term of probation. Ye previously pleaded guilty to violating the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships for failing to maintain an accurate Oil Record Book (33 U.S.C. § 1908(a)).

While working as a Chief Engineer for the *M/V Pac Antares*, Ye directed crew members to discharge oily waste and garbage overboard and to store oily waste in a tank along the keel of the vessel. The Coast Guard inspected the vessel, after the Third Engineer provided them with a hard drive containing videos and photographs of the illegal discharge. During the inspection, Ye denied any knowledge of illegal activity.

The U.S. Coast Guard conducted the investigation.



Oily rags dumped overboard

***United States v. Hamada Suisan Co., Ltd., et al.*, Nos. 1:20-CR-00072, 1:18-mj-01253 (D. Hawaii), AUSA Marc Wallenstein, with assistance from ECS Senior Counsel Elinor Colbourn.**

On October 8, 2020, a court sentenced Hamada Suisan Co. Ltd., the owner of a Japanese-flagged fishing vessel, after pleading guilty to violating the Lacey Act for attempting to export shark fins (through its crewmembers) out of Hawaii (16 U.S.C §§ 3372(a)(A), 3373(d)(1)). The company will pay a \$126,000 fine, forfeit \$119,000 (representing the value of the vessel), and complete a three-year term of probation. The company must comply with a robust compliance plan and relinquish the fishing license in Japan previously associated with its fishing vessel, the *M/V Kyoshin Maru No. 20 (Kyoshin Maru)*.

In November 2018, officials discovered approximately 962 shark fins, weighing close to 200 pounds, in checked luggage of fisherman working aboard the *Kyoshin Maru*.



Shark fins and tuna tail c/o USFWS

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Sentencings

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For approximately the one year prior, the vessel engaged in longline tuna fishing in the southern Pacific Ocean, utilizing a crew of Japanese national officers and Indonesian fishermen. During the course of the voyage, crewmembers harvested fins from approximately 300 sharks.

As the Indonesian crew prepared to depart the Honolulu International Airport on November 6, 2018, Transportation Security Administration officers discovered the shark fins in ten of the fishermen's checked luggage. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service seized the fins, valued at close to \$58,000 on the black market. The fins belonged to oceanic whitetip sharks, silky sharks, bigeye thresher sharks, hammerhead, mako, and blue sharks species.

The Japan Fisheries Agency (the Japanese agency responsible for enforcing Japan's shark finning laws) conducted a parallel investigation. In March 2019, after finding the company violated Japan's shark finning ordinances, the agency imposed an administrative penalty upon the *Kyoshin Maru*, specifically a "stoppage" that prohibited the vessel from operating for a period of 67 days, and also prohibited maintenance or repairs during the stoppage period. The vessel remained in port for approximately eight months, during which it deteriorated. The parties stipulated that \$119,000 in substitute assets is appropriate in lieu of forfeiting the vessel.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement conducted the investigation, with assistance from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Law Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

United States v. Valley Crest Foods, No. 6:20-CR-00206 (D. Ore.), AUSA Pamela Paaso and RCEC Karla Perrin.

On October 7, 2020, a court sentenced Valley Crest Foods, Inc. to pay an \$80,000 fine, after the company pleaded guilty to negligently violating the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §§ 1319(c)(1)(A), (B)).

Between 2017 and 2018, the creamery company repeatedly discharged milk and other pollutants into the local publically owned treatment works (POTW), causing waste water with elevated e-coli bacteria to enter the South Fork of the Coquille River resulting in a public health advisory. On one occasion in January 2018, after officials previously warned about illegal discharges to the POTW, Valley Crest discharged a substance with a pH between 12.69 and 13.2 causing damage to the POTW. The high pH killed approximately 90% of the organisms in one of the basins at the POTW required to treat the waste. These disruptions resulted in the POTW's inability to effectively process the waste it received from the local community.

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



POTW after milk discharged

Sentencings

***United States v. Cin-Air, LP*, No. 1:20-CR-00095 (S.D. Ohio), ECS Trial Attorney Adam Cullman and AUSA Kyle Healy.**

On October 6, 2020, a court sentenced Cin-Air LP to pay a \$90,000 fine and complete a one-year term of probation. As part of its probation, the company will provide training to all employees on spill prevention and cleanup. It also will publish a full-page acknowledgment of its conduct in *Business Air's FBO Today*. Cin-Air pleaded guilty to negligently violating the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §§ 1311, 1319(c)(1)).

Cin-Air services jets at a municipal airport. On March 21, 2019, an employee left a fuel pump on overnight causing 3,000 gallons of jet fuel to spill onto the tarmac and into a nearby storm drain. Years earlier, Cin-Air improperly removed a safety device from this fuel pump. After discovering the spill the next morning, employees washed the remaining fuel down the drain and waited approximately five hours to alert the fire department. The fuel reached the nearby Little Miami River, but was largely contained due to efforts of an outside remediation firm.



Clean up at Little Miami River

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, the Ohio Attorney General Bureau of Investigation, and the Cincinnati Fire Department conducted the investigation.

***United States v. Nathan Boss*, No. 4:19-CR-40050 (D. Mass.), AUSA Nadine Pellegrini.**

On October 5, 2020, a court sentenced Nathan Boss to time served, followed by two years' supervised release, to include five months' home confinement. Boss also will perform a community service project. Boss pleaded guilty to smuggling and making false statements for his involvement in turtle smuggling (18 U.S.C. §§ 544, 545, 1001(a)(2)).

In September 2019, federal investigators intercepted an inbound U.S. Postal Service package from Hong Kong addressed to "Shelton Boss" in Worcester, Massachusetts. The package contained four black-breasted leaf turtles, a protected species. Following a controlled delivery, Boss told the postal clerk that he used "Shelton Boss" as an alias. Boss received an earlier shipment of turtles in August 2019, and exported two shipments in October 2019 using other aliases.

Boss also received a shipment of salamanders in August 2019 that carried a fungal disease injurious to native salamander species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement conducted the investigation, with assistance from the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Sentencings

United States v. Hidden Hills Outfitters, LLC, et al., No. 8:20-CR-00087 (D. Neb.), AUSA Donald Kleine.

On October 5, 2020, court sentenced Hidden Hills Outfitters, LLC (HHO) and co-owner Jacob Hueftle for conspiring to violate the Lacey Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (18 U.S.C. § 371). Hueftle was sentenced to 30 months' imprisonment, followed by three years' supervised release, and will perform 150 hours of community service. HHO will

complete a five-year term of probation and both are jointly and severally responsible for \$214,375 in restitution to Nebraska Game and Parks. The court banned both from any form of hunting or guiding activities for 15 years. The court also sentenced Jacob's brother, Conrad Hueftle, on October 28th to complete a two-year term of probation, pay a \$5,000 fine and \$2,500 in restitution. Conrad worked as a guide for HHO. This case has been referred to as the "largest poaching case in Nebraska history." https://omaha.com/news/state-and-regional/crime-and-courts/30-plead-guilty-so-far-in-largest-poaching-case-in-nebraska-history/article_9137385c-ab8b-5c85-acb6-531b58de42d7.html.

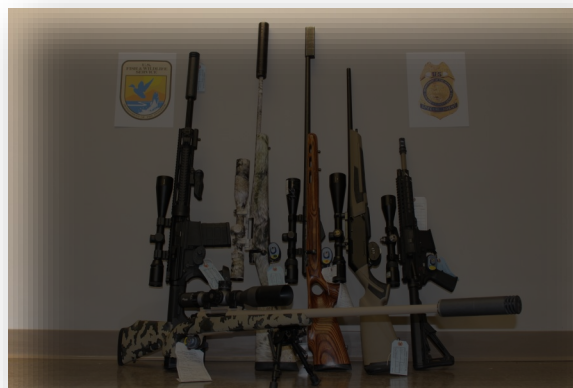
Between September 2012 and April 2018, Jacob Hueftle, HHO, and other conspirators provided guiding and outfitting services to hunting clients for the unlawful taking of close to 100 big game animals or wild turkeys in violation of Nebraska state law. HHO charged clients between \$2,500 and \$7,000 depending on the target species.

Investigators found that Hueftle and other HHO personnel intentionally established and maintained bait sites at or near client hunting locations for the purpose of taking big game or turkey. Approximately 80 percent of the archery white-tailed deer clients killed their deer within a baited area and about half of rifle white-tailed deer hunting clients hunted and killed their deer within a baited area. Other illegal hunting activity included hunting mule deer within the Nebraska Mule Deer Conservation Area, altering hunting permits, taking turkey in excess of established bag limits, and taking mule deer, white-tailed deer, pronghorn, and wild turkey with rifles or other prohibited weapons.

Hueftle and other HHO associates routinely killed non-game migratory birds with a rifle, including various species of hawks or falcons such as red-tailed hawks and American kestrels, by shooting the birds while perched upon fence lines or electrical power lines.

The sentencing is part of the ongoing prosecution of numerous defendants related to violations committed by owners, guides, and clients of Hidden Hills Outfitters. To date 34 defendants have pleaded guilty and have been sentenced and ordered to pay a total of \$595,202 in fines and restitution for underlying violations related to deer taken within baited areas; deer, pronghorn, and wild turkeys taken with weapons or firearms prohibited during their respective hunting seasons; deer taken during closed season hours, from the road, or without a valid permit; and mule deer taken within the Mule Deer Conservation Area.

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



Firearms forfeited

Sentencings

***United States v. Aaron M. Jamison et al.*, No. 5:20-CR-00016 (E.D. Ky.), AUSAs Emily Greenfield and Kate Anderson.**

On September 24, 2020, a court sentenced Aaron M. Jamison to 36 months' incarceration, followed by three years' supervised release, for violating the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), theft from an employee benefits plan, and conspiracy to commit mail fraud (18 U.S.C. §§ 371, 664; 42 U.S.C. § 6928(d)(2)(A)). The court also ordered \$640,638 in restitution.

Jamison was the CEO of Micah Group, LLC, which offered construction and remediation services to the energy and environmental sectors. The Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet paid the Micah Group to abandon (or decommission) ground water monitoring wells at numerous underground storage tank sites around the state of Kentucky (including gas stations and convenience stores). On multiple occasions, Jamison signed documents falsely representing that the company properly abandoned the wells, which was not true. Between 2013 and 2017, the state of Kentucky paid Jamison and his company approximately \$640,000 based on these falsified documents. Between January 2016 and December 2017, the Micah Group also stored hazardous waste on site without a permit.

Between March and October 2016, Jamison failed to remit more than \$30,000 in employee 401(k) contributions withheld from their paychecks, diverting the funds for his personal use and business expenditures. In April 2017, he also failed to remit close to \$5,000 withheld from employees for pre-tax health contributions. Project manager David Joslyn remains similarly charged.

The U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division and Office of Inspector General, and the United States Department of Labor, conducted the investigation, with assistance from the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet.

Position	Name	Phone
Chief	Deborah Harris	
Deputy Chief		
Assistant Chief		
Assistant Chief		
Assistant Chief		
Assistant Chief		
Assistant Chief		
Senior Litigation Counsel		
Senior Litigation Counsel		
Senior Counsel for Wildlife		
Senior Counsel		
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Trial Attorney	Leigh Rende	
Trial Attorney		