



Monthly

# Bulletin

## Environmental Crimes Section

March 2021

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U.S. Attorney Audrey Strauss said: “As they admitted in court today, James Petro and Richard McGoey decided to cut corners and do things on the cheap, soliciting bids for demolition work without disclosing that the property contained asbestos. The contract was awarded to a contractor unqualified to do asbestos abatement work, and as a result Petro and McGoey jeopardized the health and safety of the people they had a responsibility to protect.” [From [press release](#) for *U.S. v. Petro et al.* See [inside](#) for more details.]

District/Circuit	Case Name	Case Type/Statutes
District of Alaska	<a href="#"><u>United States v. Thomas Yoon et al.</u></a>	Asbestos Abatement/CAA
Southern District of California	<a href="#"><u>United States v. Jose Jesus Guillen</u></a> <a href="#"><u>United States v. Huber Ortiz-Herrera</u></a> <a href="#"><u>United States v. Yvette Saravia</u></a> <a href="#"><u>United States v. Manuel Macias Mendoza</u></a>	Pesticide Smuggling/ Conspiracy, Smuggling
Southern District of Florida	<a href="#"><u>United States v. Bruce W. Bivins, et al.</u></a>	Turtle Egg Harvesting/Lacey Act, Recidivists
Southern District of Iowa	<a href="#"><u>United States v. Russell McKeehan</u></a>	Metal Plating Waste/RCRA
Eastern District of Kentucky	<a href="#"><u>United States v. Cory Hoskins</u></a> <a href="#"><u>United States v. Sherman Jude et al.</u></a>	Radioactive Waste/HMTA Ginseng Harvesting/Lacey Act
Southern District of Mississippi	<a href="#"><u>United States v. Kenneth R. Britt, Jr., et al.</u></a>	Turkey Hunts/Conspiracy, Lacey Act
District of New Jersey	<a href="#"><u>United States v. Jude Amadike</u></a>	Pesticide Sales/FIFRA
Southern District of New York	<a href="#"><u>United States v. James R. Petro, Jr., et al.</u></a>	Asbestos Abatement/CAA
Western District of New York	<a href="#"><u>United States v. James S. Marshall</u></a>	Asbestos Abatement/CAA
Northern District of Ohio	<a href="#"><u>United States v. Theodore Lutton et al.</u></a>	Eagle and Hawk Killing/BGEPA, MBTA, Drugs, Firearms
Southern District of Ohio	<a href="#"><u>United States v. Gary Nale</u></a> <a href="#"><u>United States v. Ryan Gibbs</u></a>	Paddlefish Harvesting/Lacey Act Tiger Skin Sale/Lacey Act
District of Oregon	<a href="#"><u>United States v. Adrian D. Wood</u></a>	Elk Killing/Lacey Act
District of Puerto Rico	<a href="#"><u>United States v. Aristides Sanchez</u></a>	Coral Sales/Lacey Act
Northern District of Texas	<a href="#"><u>United States v. Severo Zamora</u></a>	Refrigerant Sales/Smuggling

## Indictments/Informations

***United States v. Severo Zamora et al.*, No. 4:21-CR-00024 (N.D. Tex.), AUSA Douglas A. Allen.**

On February 2, 2021, prosecutors charged Faiz Abdallahi and Severo Zamora with illegally importing approximately 2,300 cylinders of R-22 (aka HCFC-22) in May 2017 (18 U.S.C. § 545). The two submitted falsified and fraudulent documents to the Customs and Border Patrol indicating the cylinders contained R-32 (aka HFC-32), an acceptable refrigerant.

Following the implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer in January 2010, authorities banned all production, import and use of hydro chlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs). Trial is scheduled to begin on April 19, 2021.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division and the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol conducted the investigation.

***United States v. Theodore Lutton et al.*, No. 1:20-CR-00744 (N.D. Ohio), AUSAs Yasmine Makridis and Brad Beeson.**

On February 19, 2021, prosecutors charged Theodore Lutton and Christine Lutton with violating the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), drug charges, and illegally possessing 27 firearms (16 U.S.C. §§ 668a, 703, 707 (a); 18 U.S.C. §§ 922, 924; 21 U.S.C. §§ 841).

In October 2020, federal agents executed a search warrant at the Lutton residence. They seized 20 firearms, blasting caps, a hand grenade, Kevlar vests, a dead bald eagle, and an improvised explosive device. As a convicted felon for a prior drug conviction, Theodore Lutton cannot legally possess firearms. Investigators also found a frozen red-tailed hawk, in violation of the MBTA. After arresting Lutton, investigators found additional firearms following the search of a second residence.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Columbiana County Sheriff's Office conducted the investigation.

## Guilty Pleas

***United States v. Cory Hoskins*, No. 20-CR-00010 (E.D. Ky.), AUSA Tashena Fannin, with assistance from ECS Assistant Chief Jennifer Whitfield.**

On February 24, 2021, Cory Hoskins pleaded guilty to violating the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act for transporting radioactive material without shipping papers, placards, or proper labels (49 U.S.C. § 5124). Sentencing is scheduled for June 30, 2021.

Hoskins began operating Advanced Tenorm Services, a small family-owned waste disposal business in 2015. Throughout the course of doing business, he purported to possess expertise in radiological testing, surveying, transporting, and disposing of various types of waste. Hoskins unlawfully transported thousands of tons of oil and gas waste (sludge) from Fairmont Brine Processing in West Virginia into Kentucky. Hoskins knew the sludge he offered to transport and dispose contained levels of radioactivity requiring HAZMAT endorsements in order to transport it. He ultimately caused the shipment of approximately 34 tractor-trailer sized containers (vacuum boxes) from West Virginia to the Blue Ridge Landfill in Irvine, Kentucky, concealing the true nature of the material from the trucking companies and drivers he hired to transport and mix the sludge along the way. State authorities closed the landfill within months of discovering the material, and continue to monitor and test the area for elevated radiation levels and potential harm to the surrounding environment.

The Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General conducted the investigation.



*Sludge-filled containers*

***United States v. James R. Petro, Jr., et al.*, Nos. 7:21-CR-00103, 00104 (S.D.N.Y.), AUSAs Margery Feinzig and James McMahon.**

On February 18, 2021, James R. Petro, Jr., and Richard McGoey pleaded guilty to violating the Clean Air Act for causing the release of asbestos during a demolition project (42 U.S.C. § 7413(c)(4)). Sentencing is scheduled for May 27, 2021.

In 1999, the Town of New Windsor, New York, purchased 250 acres from the Department of the Army. The property contained dozens of



*Building demolition*

*(Continued on page 5)*



## Guilty Pleas

*(Continued from page 4)*

military barracks and other buildings built in the 1940's. Following the purchase, the Town contracted with a Developer to lease and develop the land. The Town formerly employed Petro as a Planning and Zoning Coordinator and McGoey as an engineer. Between 2006 and 2009, New Windsor officials applied for a number of grants to abate asbestos in some of the buildings and completely demolish other buildings. Petro and McGoey participated in preparing and submitting the grant applications.

In May 2008, the Developer obtained a report from an asbestos inspector that confirmed ten buildings contained asbestos. In June 2012, the defendants and others reviewed abatement bids. Between May and June 2015, the group drafted a request for proposals to demolish the ten buildings, without mentioning the presence of asbestos. After the Town published this request, it awarded a \$262,000 demolition contract to the lowest bidder, a contractor not qualified to properly handle and remove asbestos.

During the week of August 11, 2015, the contractor and his crew demolished the buildings using a backhoe, releasing asbestos to the open air. After concerned citizens notified local officials, they suspended the operation.

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

### ***United States v. Jose Jesus Guillen, No. 3:20-CR-03169 (S.D. Calif.), ECS Trial Attorney Stephen DaPonte and AUSA Melanie Pierson.***

On February 17, 2021, Jose Jesus Guillen pleaded guilty to conspiracy to smuggle pesticides into the United States (18 U.S.C. § 371.) Sentencing is scheduled for May 7, 2021.

Authorities apprehended Guillen in September 2020, as he attempted to enter the United States from Mexico with 24 bottles of "Metaldane 600," a Mexican pesticide.

Those involved in clandestine marijuana grows use illegal pesticides to cultivate unregulated marijuana on both public and private land in the United States.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division and Homeland Security Investigations conducted the investigation.

## Guilty Pleas

### ***United States v. James S. Marshall, No. 6:20-CR-006003 (W.D.N.Y), AUSA Aaron Mango.***

On February 9, 2021, James S. Marshall pleaded guilty to negligent endangerment under the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. §§ 7412, 7413(c)(1), (c)(4)). Sentencing is scheduled for May 10, 2021.

Marshall worked as a maintenance supervisor with the Finger Lakes Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). As part of his duties, Marshall controlled and supervised facilities under renovation or slated for demolition.

In October 2014, the defendant requested asbestos testing at the Hillcrest Building, owned by the OPWDD. Marshall directed an asbestos inspector to take four samples from just two locations within the 300,000 square-foot building.

The results of the four samples came back negative for asbestos. In November 2014, the OPWDD began soliciting bids to cleanout the building based upon these sample results. In December 2014, a third-party contractor won the bid and completed the work in April 2015. OPWDD received notification from Marshall of the successful cleanout shortly thereafter.

Building inspectors subsequently located regulated asbestos-containing material (RACM) throughout the building. In addition to failing to make sure workers adequately wetted the RACM and sealed it in leak-tight containers, Marshall placed others in imminent danger of death and serious bodily injury during the cleanout.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division conducted the investigation, with assistance from the New York State Department of Labor Asbestos Control Bureau.



*Hillcrest Building*

## Sentencings

### ***United States v. Thomas Yoon et al.*, No. 3:19-CR-00107 (D. Alaska), AUSA Charisse Arce and RCEC Karla Perrin.**

On February 25, 2021, a court sentenced Tae Ryung Yoon, aka Thomas Yoon, Yoo Jin Management Company, Ltd., and Mush Inn Corporation for violating the Clean Air Act (CAA) (42 U.S.C. §§ 7413(c)(1),(c)(4)). The companies will complete three-year terms' of probation and are jointly and severally responsible for paying a \$35,000 fine and \$30,000 in restitution. The government is seeking an additional \$27,080 in restitution for medical monitoring costs of the victims exposed to asbestos. This hearing is scheduled for March 15, 2021. Yoon will complete a two-year term of probation and perform 100 hours of community service.

Mush Inn and Yoo Jin Management jointly owned the Northern Lights shopping center. They contracted with Yoon in November 2014 to oversee an unlicensed contractor's renovation of a boiler room containing asbestos insulation. The defendants knew about the presence of asbestos in the shopping center from previous renovations conducted by shopping center tenants. Despite this knowledge, they failed to submit any notification to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency prior to commencing the project in January 2015. The contractor also failed to comply with the work practice standards as required by the CAA's National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants for asbestos. The defendants' actions exposed at least four workers to asbestos-containing material.

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



*Asbestos waste in boiler room*

## Sentencings

***United States v. Kenneth R. Britt, Jr., et al.*, No. 5:20-CR-00007 (S.D. Miss.), Acting U.S. Attorney Darren LaMarca.**

On February 24, 2021, a court sentenced four hunters for illegally killing wild turkeys in 2017 and 2018.

Kenneth R. Britt, Jr., Tony Grant Smith, Barney Leon Bairfield, III, and Dustin Corey Treadway pleaded guilty to violating the Lacey Act for illegally killing wild turkeys in Kansas and Nebraska, travelling back to Mississippi with trophy spurs and beards. They took more than 25 wild turkeys without the required hunting licenses and in excess of the “two per person per season” limit, in violation of state law. Britt, Smith and Bairfield pleaded guilty to conspiring to violate the Lacey Act and Treadway pleaded guilty to violating the Lacey Act (18 U.S.C. § 371; 16 U.S.C. § 3372(a)(2)(A)).

Britt will pay a \$25,000 fine and complete a five-year term of probation. Smith will pay a \$15,000 fine and complete a four-year term of probation. Treadway will pay a \$5,000 fine and complete a two-year term of probation. Bairfield will pay a \$3,000 fine and complete a two-year term of probation. All are banned from hunting while under supervision.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks conducted the investigation.



*Turkeys killed by defendants*

***United States v. Aristides Sanchez*, No. 1:17-CR-00488 (D. P. R.), ECS Trial Attorney Christopher Hale and AUSA Carmen Marquez.**

On February 22, 2021, a court sentenced Aristides Sanchez to one year and one day of incarceration, followed by two years’ supervised release. Sanchez also will perform 120 hours’ community service and is banned from collecting marine life while under supervision. Sanchez pleaded guilty to violating the Lacey Act for trafficking in and mislabeling marine wildlife (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372(a)(2)(A), 3373(d)(1)(B)).

The defendant owned a saltwater aquarium business called Wonders of the Reef Aquarium. A large part of the business was devoted to the sale of native Puerto Rican marine species that are popular in the saltwater aquarium trade. Sanchez sent live specimens to customers in the mainland United States and foreign countries by commercial courier services. One of the most popular items that Sanchez sent was an



*Ricordea*

*(Continued on page 9)*



## Sentencings

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organism from the genus Ricordea. These animals are known as “rics,” “polyps,” or “mushrooms” in the aquarium industry. Ricordea form part of the reef structure and spend their adult lives fastened in place to the reef. These animals are colorful in natural light and appear to glow under the UV lights that are typically used in high-end saltwater aquariums.

Sanchez sent approximately 130 illegal shipments of coral from Puerto Rico to other countries and the mainland United States between January 2013 and March 2016. The retail value of these shipments was between \$800,000 and \$1,200,000.

Juan Pablo Castro Torres and Luis Joel Vargas-Martell pleaded guilty in related cases.

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

### ***United States v. Russell McKeehan, No. 4:20-CR-00072 (S.D. Iowa), AUSA Debra Scorpiniti.***

On February 18, 2021, a court sentenced Russell McKeehan to complete a four-year term of probation, to include six months' home confinement. McKeehan pleaded guilty to violating the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act for storing hazardous waste without a permit (42 U.S.C. § 6928(d)(2)).

Beginning in 2009, McKeehan, doing business as Chrome Reflections, operated a chrome and metal plating and polishing business in Des Moines, Iowa. After moving to another plant in March 2013, the company continued to store more than 3,800 kilograms of hazardous waste at the former facility for approximately four years, without a permit. These wastes tested positively for toxicity, reactivity, and corrosivity characteristics.

The 13-month site clean up cost close to \$80,000. The Court ordered McKeehan to pay restitution in the amount of \$49,926 toward the cleanup costs, per an agreement with the property owner who agreed to cover \$30,000 himself.

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



*Tanks holding hazardous waste*

## Sentencings

### ***United States v. Gary Nale*, No. 1:20-CR-00097 (S.D. Ohio), ECS Trial Attorney Rich Powers and AUSA Laura Clemmens.**

On February 17, 2021, a court sentenced Gary Nale to pay a \$2,500 fine and complete a three-year term of probation for illegal fishing. During probation, Nale is prohibited from fishing in the Ohio River.

Between November 2012 and April 2019, Nale worked as a deckhand for a commercial fisherman (JS). JS made a living by catching American paddlefish from the Ohio River and selling the harvested roe. On at least three separate occasions, JS and Nale used gill nets to unlawfully take paddlefish from waters of the Ohio River that were within the Ohio state boundary. Ohio state authorities have prohibited the use of commercial gill fishing nets within its waters since 1983. Nale pleaded guilty to violating the Lacey Act for trafficking in illegally harvested paddlefish (16.U.S.C. §§ 3372(a)(2)(A), 3373(d)(2)).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources conducted the investigation. “Operation Charlie” targeted commercial fishermen illegally harvesting paddlefish from the Ohio River.

### ***United States v. Sherman Jude, et al.*, No. 7:20-CR-00009 (E.D. Ky.), AUSA Emily Greenfield.**

On February 17, 2021, a court sentenced Sherman Jude and Jonathon Jude for illegally purchasing ginseng and failing to record these purchases in violation of the Lacey Act (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372(a)(2)(B), 3373(d)(1)(B)). Sherman Jude will pay a \$30,000 fine and complete a two-year term of probation. Johnathan Jude will pay a \$1,500 fine and complete a one-year term of probation.

Sherman Jude was a licensed dealer of wild American ginseng who worked with his son, Jonathon. Between 2016 and 2019, the Judes falsified Kentucky Ginseng Purchase Forms for multiple purchases of wild ginseng, failed to keep records for all purchases, bought ginseng harvested out of season, and purchased ginseng from out of state that had not been properly certified. Sherman Jude also purchased 12.5 pounds of ginseng harvested out of season.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources conducted the investigation.

## Sentencings

***United States v. Huber Ortiz-Herrera*, No. 3:20-CR-02024 (S.D. Calif.), ECS Trial Attorney Stephen DaPonte and AUSA Melanie Pierson.**

On February 16, 2020, a court sentenced Huber Ortiz-Herrera to one day time-served and ordered him to pay \$2,500 in restitution, after pleading guilty to smuggling (18 U.S.C. § 545.)

Authorities apprehended Ortiz-Herrera in April 2020, as he attempted to smuggle illegal Mexican pesticides and fertilizers into the United States. Ortiz-Herrera possessed five 1-liter bottles of "Furadan" and twelve 1-liter bottles of "Bayfolan."

Those involved in clandestine marijuana grows use illegal pesticides to cultivate unregulated marijuana on both public and private land in the United States.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division and Homeland Security Investigations conducted the investigation.

***United States v. Yvette Saravia*, No. 3:20-CR-02427 (S.D. Calif.), ECS Trial Attorney Stephen DaPonte and AUSA Melanie Pierson.**

On February 16, 2021, a court sentenced Yvette Saravia to one day time-served and ordered her to pay \$2,500 in restitution, after pleading guilty to smuggling (18 U.S.C. § 545.)

Authorities apprehended Saravia in May 2020, as she attempted to smuggle illegal Mexican pesticides into the United States. Saravia possessed seven 960-mililiter bottles of "Biofos 600," five 1-liter bottles of "Rotamik," three 1-liter bottles of "Tokat 240," three 1-liter bottles of "AK-20," one 1-liter bottle of "Acarzole," and one 960-mililiter bottle of "Tetrasan."

Those involved in clandestine marijuana grows use illegal pesticides to cultivate unregulated marijuana on both public and private land in the United States.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division and Homeland Security Investigations conducted the investigation.

***United States v. Manuel Macias Mendoza et al.*, No. 3:20-CR-02432 (S. D. Calif.), ECS Trial Attorney Stephen DaPonte and AUSA Melanie Pierson.**

On February 9, 2021, a court sentenced Manuel Macias Mendoza to one day time-served and ordered him to pay \$1,200 in restitution.

In March 2020, authorities apprehended Mendoza and co-defendant Maria Elena Macias as they attempted to smuggle Mexican pesticides (five one-liter bottles of "Metaldane 600") into the United States from Mexico. A court sentenced Macias on December 8, 2020, to complete a six-month term of probation. Both defendants pleaded guilty to conspiracy (18 U.S.C. § 371.) Those involved in clandestine marijuana grows use illegal pesticides to cultivate unregulated marijuana on both public and private land in the United States.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division and Homeland Security Investigations conducted the investigation.

## Sentencings

### ***United States v. Jude Amadike*, No. 2:19-mj-03556 (D.N.J.), AUSA Jason Garelick.**

On February 9, 2021, a court sentenced Jude Amadike to complete a one-month term of probation and forfeit more than 1,700 bottles of an unregistered pesticide. Amadike pleaded guilty to violating the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act for importing Sniper DDVP, from Nigeria and selling it to individuals across the United States (7 U.S.C. §§ 136j(a)(1)(A), 136l(b)(1)(B)).

In March 2018, law enforcement began investigating sales of Sniper DDVP on Amazon and eBay. In April 2018, Amazon prohibited its sale. Following Amazon's ban, Amadike turned to other websites to sell the product. After executing a search warrant at the defendant's home in November 2018, agents seized 18 cases (more than 1,700 bottles) of the pesticide. Further testing confirmed the presence of diclorvos or DDVP, a regulated pesticide.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division and Homeland Security Investigations conducted the investigation, with assistance from U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

### ***United States v. Bruce W. Bivins, et al.*, No. 9:20-CR-80091 (S.D. Fla.), AUSA John McMillan and former AUSA Lauren Jorgensen.**

On February 9, 2021, a court sentenced Bruce W. Bivins to seven months' incarceration, followed by one year of supervised release. Bivins pleaded guilty to violating the Lacey Act for poaching close to 100 sea turtle eggs (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372(a)(1), 3373(d)(1)(B)). Bivins and co-defendant Carl L. Cobb previously served jail time for a similar offense. Cobb was sentenced to nine months' incarceration on March 9, 2021, after pleading guilty to similar charges.

On May 24, 2020, Cobb took Bivins to Singer Island Beach, where Bivins located a sea turtle nest. Bivins removed 93 eggs and called Cobb to pick him up. Local authorities were familiar with Cobb and his vehicle from previous cases. On the night of the incident, they observed him traveling toward the beach.

Wildlife agents observed Bivins taking the eggs and Cobb returning to pick him up.



*Sniper DDVP*



*Sea turtle eggs on tailgate*

*(Continued on page 13)*



## Sentencings

*(Continued from page 12)*

After officers stopped the truck, they found Cobb in the driver's seat, Bivins in the passenger's seat, and 93 sand-dusted turtle eggs inside a black bag in the bed of the truck. Marine biologists relocated the recovered eggs, but none of them hatched.

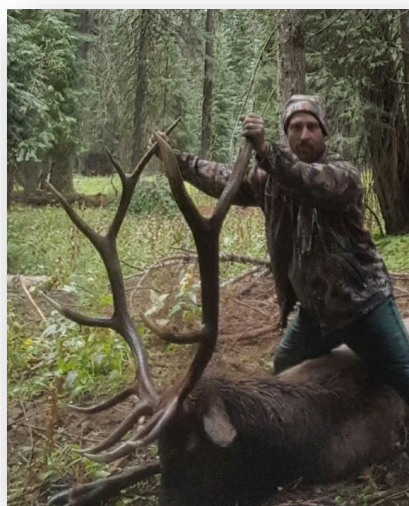
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission conducted the investigation.

### ***United States v. Adrian D. Wood, No. 1:19-CR-00168 (D. Ore.), AUSA Adam Delph.***

On February 5, 2021, a court sentenced Adrian D. Wood to complete a five-year term of probation, to include six months' community confinement, for poaching in Crater Lake National Park. Wood will pay \$42,500 in restitution to the National Park Service and forfeit hunting equipment. The court restricted him from hunting during the term of probation, but banned Wood for life from entering the Park. Wood pleaded guilty to violating the Lacey Act for illegally killing a bull elk in September 2016 (16 U.S.C. §§ 3372(a)(1), 3373(d)(1)).

Authorities began investigating Wood's illegal hunting activities in July 2014, after hunters informed them of his poaching in the Park. The evidence included texts and photos from Wood bragging about his kills. The investigation continued through October 2016, when authorities executed a search warrant at Wood's residence. They seized multiple firearms, assorted ammunition, and several wildlife specimens. They also acquired GPS data confirming that the majority of Wood's hunting excursions (between 2011 and 2016) occurred within the Park boundaries.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement, the National Park Service, and the Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division conducted the investigation.



*Photo Wood posted on Facebook*

## Sentencings

***United States v. Ryan J. Gibbs*, No. 2:20-CR-00097 (S.D. Ohio), SAUSA Mike Marous and ECS Trial Attorney Adam Cullman.**

On February 3, 2021, a court sentenced Ryan J. Gibbs to pay a \$100,000 fine, complete a one-year term of probation, and perform 80 hours of community service. Gibbs also will surrender a variety of wildlife items. Gibbs pleaded guilty to violating the Endangered Species Act for purchasing a tiger skin rug (16 U.S.C. §§ 1538(a)(1)(E), 1540 (b)(1)).

In August 2018, Gibb contacted an individual in the United Kingdom about buying a tiger skin rug. The man told Gibbs he could not legally ship tiger skins to the United States, but knew someone in Minnesota who sold them.

Through a series of emails and calls, Gibbs discussed with this person (an undercover Fish and Wildlife Service agent) that he wanted to purchase a tiger skin and a mounted flamingo. Gibbs and the agent discussed the illegality of buying and selling tiger parts across state lines. In December 2018, Gibbs bought three mounted birds (a tufted puffin, a horned puffin, and a flamingo) for a total of \$1,200, from the agent.

Over the next several months, Gibbs and the agent communicated intermittently about the tiger skin. In August 2019, they met again, where Gibbs paid the agent \$3,000 for the skin.

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

***Environmental Crimes Section Attorneys: (Main # 202-305-0321)***

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Senior Litigation Counsel	Howard P. Stewart	
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Senior Counsel for Wildlife	Elinor Colbourn	
Senior Counsel	Kris Dighe	
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Senior Trial Attorney	Daniel Dooher	
Senior Trial Attorney	Todd Gleason	
Senior Trial Attorney	Jeremy Korzenik	
Senior Trial Attorney	Ken Nelson	
Trial Attorney	Cassandra Barnum	
Trial Attorney	Mary Dee Carraway	
Trial Attorney	Ryan Connors	
Trial Attorney	Adam Cullman	
Trial Attorney	Stephen DaPonte	
Trial Attorney	Gary Donner	
Trial Attorney	Patrick Duggan	
Trial Attorney	Ethan Eddy	
Trial Attorney	Matthew Evans	
Trial Attorney	Stephen Foster	
Trial Attorney	Christopher Hale	
Trial Attorney	Joel LaBissonniere	
Trial Attorney	Samuel (Charlie) Lord	
Trial Attorney	Shennie Patel	
Trial Attorney	Erica Pencak	
Trial Attorney	Richard Powers	
Trial Attorney	Banu Rangarajan	
Trial Attorney	Leigh Rende	
Trial Attorney	Lauren Steele	