

U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Southern District of Florida

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Miami, Florida 33132-2111

March 31, 2009

NEWS RELEASE: PARROT SMUGGLER GUILTY PLEA

William A. Keefer, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida and Kevin Adams, Special Agent in Charge, United States Fish & Wildlife Service, announce that **ADOLPH "BUZZ" PARE, 62**, of Miami, Florida, doing business as **GATORS OF MIAMI, INC.**, pled guilty today to two counts of an indictment charging him with conspiring to illegally smuggle African grey parrots into the United States and to defraud the United States Fish and Wildlife Service by filing false importation documents on twelve different shipments of parrots, in violation of the Lacey Act, 16 U.S.C. § 3372(d); and the smuggling statute, 18 U.S.C. § 545. The defendant also pled guilty to one count of making and submitting a false record for a shipment of 600 parrots in violation of the Lacey Act, 16 U.S.C. § 3372(d)(1). In a plea agreement filed today, **PARE** agreed to pay fines and restitution totaling \$300,000, the largest sum ever in a federal wildlife smuggling case in the United States. The defendant faces a maximum penalty of up to five years in prison and up to \$250,000.00 in fines on each of the two counts when sentenced on July 10, 1997 at 4:00 p.m.

According to the Indictment and public documents, **GATORS OF MIAMI, INC.** was the nation's largest importer of African grey parrots during 1988, 1989 and 1990, having imported approximately 24% of all such birds. Between February 1988 and August 1991, the defendant, doing business as **GATORS OF MIAMI, INC.**, conspired to smuggle into Miami approximately fourteen shipments of over 4,000 "Congo" African grey parrots which had been illegally taken from their wild habitat in Zaire, where the commercial trade in grey parrots had been completely banned.

The African grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus erithacus*) is listed as a protected species in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species ("CITES"). These particular parrots were smuggled from Zaire to the laundering county of Senegal, and then exported using false CITES export documents to the United States. The CITES export documents falsely stated that the parrots originated in Guinea or the Ivory Coast, countries where the "Congo" African grey parrot does not occur in the wild. African grey parrots are highly desired birds within the pet bird trade and a large "Congo" African grey parrot will commonly command a retail price of approximately \$600 to \$1,000 per bird in the United States.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Lauren J. Priegues of the Environmental Crimes Section, and John T. Webb, Senior Trial Attorney, Wildlife and Marine

Resources Section, Environmental and Natural Resources Division, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. Mr. Keefer commended the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for their work on the case.