



Department of Justice

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REDDING, CALIFORNIA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ILLEGAL KILLING

OF TROPHY BULL ELK

Faces \$50,000 Penalty, Probation and Lifetime Ban on Hunting and Fishing

Portland, Ore. - Ronald Ray Jurin, of Redding, California, pled guilty to a felony wildlife charge before U.S. District Court Judge Ancer L. Haggerty today, admitting he illegally killed a trophy bull elk near LaGrande, Oregon and took part in a number of other illegal hunts. Jurin entered a plea agreement with the United States Attorney's Office which calls for him to serve three years on federal probation, pay a \$50,000 penalty, and agree to a lifetime ban on hunting and fishing in Oregon. The ban will apply in 25 other states as well. Sentencing is scheduled for November 18, 2008 at 9:30 a.m.

"Hunters who play by the rules wait as long as thirteen years for a chance to hunt an elk in this treasured part of Oregon," stated U.S. Attorney Karin J. Immergut. "Ron Jurin thought he was above the law and flaunted Oregon hunting law over and over – now he's an admitted felon, and will pay the price."

Jurin, 37, pleaded guilty to a one-count information charging him with a felony violation of the federal Lacey Act. The charge stems from the September 23, 2006 illegal killing of a branch-antlered elk in the Wenaha Hunt Unit in eastern Oregon and the subsequent interstate transport of the elk to Jurin's home in California.

The Lacey Act prohibits the import, export, sale or transport in interstate or foreign commerce when the wildlife was taken, possessed, transported or sold in violation of any state or foreign law. The case was investigated by agents with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division.

"We hope this case sends a message that theft of the state's natural resources will not be tolerated," said Robert Romero, the Fish and Wildlife Service's Resident Agent in Charge for Oregon.

Jurin admitted in federal court that he did not have a tag authorizing him to hunt elk in the Wenaha Hunt Unit. The Wenaha Hunt Unit is among the most sought-after trophy bull elk hunting areas in the state of Oregon, with less than one percent of the applicants receiving a tag. Law-abiding hunters wait as long as 13 years to earn enough points to draw a tag for bull elk in

the Wenaha Hunt Unit, or they can participate in an auction for a tag, which can cost up to \$25,000. In 2006, only five tags were auctioned state-wide, with two being used in the Wenaha Hunt Unit.

Jurin also admitted in federal court that in 2006 he:

- illegally hunted three bears before the season began and used bait to attract the bears;
- illegally killed a cow elk without a tag, and then used a falsified tag to make the kill appear legal;
- illegally killed a white-tailed deer using a cross bow and by aid of an artificial light.

As part of his punishment, Jurin will be banned for life from hunting and fishing in the state of Oregon. Oregon is a member of the Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact, a group of 26 states which have agreed to honor hunting restrictions imposed on hunters in member states. Member states include Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

In addition to the monetary penalty and lifetime hunting and fishing ban, the plea agreement calls for Jurin to be placed on federal probation for a period of three years, and to pay \$4,700 in restitution to the state of Oregon to compensate the state for the illegally taken wildlife. The agreement also requires Jurin to publish a public apology in eastern Oregon newspapers and *Oregon Hunter* magazine.

Jurin forfeited the rack and remains of the bull elk he illegally killed, which were seized by agents, and the Compound Bow he used to kill the elk. In 2001, Jurin was convicted of killing two buck deer during the closed season in Lake County, Oregon. The deer were killed at night with the aid of an artificial light.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Dwight C. Holton and investigated by agents of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and Oregon State Police.