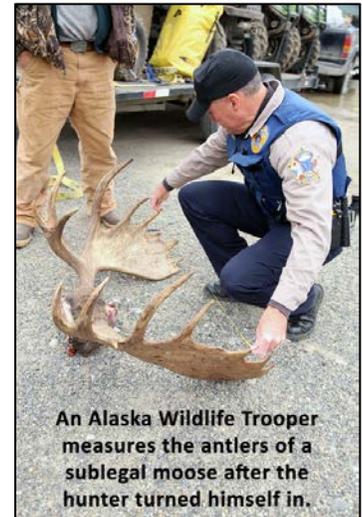


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Self-Reporting Hunting Offenses is the Ethical Thing to Do

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – Hunting season is here again and every hunter has the responsibility to make sure that the game they take is legal. Some common examples of illegally taken game include taking a sub-legal moose or sheep or taking an animal in a closed area. Sometimes mistakes happen and the animal harvested is not legal. When this occurs, the hunter may be subject to criminal penalties. So, what should a hunter do if this happens?

Not only is reporting yourself to the Alaska Wildlife Troopers the ethical thing to do, you will be treated differently than if your actions were discovered through investigations by authorities. You will likely receive a citation for taking the animal illegally; however **you will receive a substantially lower fine and other potential leniency compared to not self-reporting.** In most situations, Alaska Wildlife Troopers will recommend that fines be consistent with self-reporting cases in other areas of the state and the illegal take be resolved as a violation instead of a criminal offense.



In the last two years, the average number of hunting cases statewide for Aug. 10 through Sept. 1 – considered the first 20 days of hunting season in most areas – has been 18 sheep and 24 moose kills. These numbers increase as the season progresses. They represent a variety of case types, however the prevalent cases are sub-legal antlers and horns as well as waste cases.

It will always be worse for the hunter if they leave the animal to waste. If hunters are caught and convicted of wasting a big game animal, the mandatory minimum fine is \$2500 and seven days in jail. Additionally, hunters typically lose their equipment such as rifles, ATV, boats and airplanes used in commission of the crime.

Under hunting and trapping regulations in Alaska, there is no requirement that a person self-report their unlawful take of game. Ethical hunters will obligate themselves to take ownership of the mistake and self-report to authorities, but they may not know the best steps to proceed.

If you have taken game that is not legal follow these steps:

- 1. Immediately validate your harvest ticket or permit for the appropriate species and if possible make a note of your intention to self-report.**
- 2. As soon as possible after taking illegal game, contact your local Alaska Wildlife Trooper office. Advise them of your situation and your location.**
- 3. After harvesting an animal, you must comply with salvage requirements for that species. The Alaska Wildlife Troopers will tell you where to take the animal.**

4. Keep the meat in the best condition possible. This may mean you will need to come out of the field to prevent spoilage.

After self-reporting your violation, you can expect an Alaska Wildlife Trooper will speak to you about your hunt. Salvaged meat, hide, antlers, or horns will be seized. According to Alaska law, animals taken unlawfully are the property of the state. The meat is usually donated to a charitable organization but may be retained as evidence. Hides, horns, or antlers will be retained by Alaska Wildlife Troopers until instructed by the court.

Hunters who do not self-report their error risk being discovered by Alaska Wildlife Troopers in the future. Carefully consider your actions after you take an animal unlawfully in Alaska. Your next decision can determine the consequences of your actions.

Hunting regulations are found on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game website at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=hunting.main>.

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