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AWT Investigation Results in Guilty Plea

On January 15, 2016, Jack S. Stewart, Jr., of Adak, pled guilty in Anchorage District Court to three counts of transporting big game hunters in the field without a license. Stewart was charged after an investigation by the Alaska Wildlife Troopers, Wildlife Investigations Unit, into reports of caribou hunters being transported by unlicensed individuals for compensation. In September 2014, Stewart solicited and provided transportation services with the use of a boat to undercover investigators on Adak Island for caribou hunting. Stewart later provided the same services to three caribou hunters in October 2014.

“Members of the community had come forward with complaints in the past couple of years but this investigation was the first that actually turned up illegal activity,” said Sergeant Katrina Malm. “Illegal activity like this takes away from the legal establishments in the community and gives outside hunters an unfair advantage while taking caribou.”

Big game transporters are regulated through the Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing, and are required to pay license fees every two years, \$650.00 at the time of the offenses, and carry insurance.

“A company not carrying insurance can be very dangerous for clients. This unlicensed operator was taking risks that many insured, licensed big game transporters wouldn’t likely take as they would have a financial burden if anything were to go wrong,” Sergeant Malm said. “It really puts clients in a tight spot.”

Stewart was sentenced to 30 days in jail with 30 days suspended for each count, for a total of 90 days in jail with 90 days suspended. He was also fined \$4,000 with \$3,000 suspended on each count, for a total of \$12,000 with \$9,000 suspended and was put on probation for five years. Stewart was also required to pay restitution to the State of Alaska for the cost of the investigation.

Illegal transporting is an issue not isolated to Adak. It happens all over the state of Alaska. AWT hopes that this case serves as a deterrent to other illegal hunting and guiding activity.