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Haines Guide Sentenced for Federal and State Hunting Crimes

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – A joint investigation between Alaska, United States and Canadian authorities resulted in the sentencing of a Haines guide in both federal and state court on numerous wildlife offenses. Ronald L. Martin, 72, was sentenced in a Juneau court in May to two state misdemeanor charges stemming from an ongoing investigation regarding unlawful bear and goat hunts in the Haines area.

The charges stem from multiple unlawful hunts that Martin guided in the Haines area between 2008 and 2011. In a plea agreement, Martin pleaded guilty to aiding a client in a violation, stemming from a client who wounded a brown bear, which was never recovered, at a bait site in 2010. Martin also pleaded guilty to baiting unregistered bait sites in 2011. Only black bears can legally be taken at a bait site in the Haines area. Due to a joint resolution between the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Alaska Department of Law and the Alaska Wildlife Troopers, Martin was charged with numerous felony federal charges and pleaded to two of the many state misdemeanor hunting charges he was facing in state court.

As part of the state's plea agreement in May, Martin was fined \$40,000 with \$30,000 suspended and forfeited to the State of Alaska a PA-18 Piper Supercub, a F250 Ford truck, a Honda Foreman ATV and a .338 rifle and scope. Also, Martin's Alaska hunting license is revoked until May 2016 and he is prohibited from guiding, outfitting or transporting hunters. He is also prohibited from acting as a consultant, or expediting, booking or renting hunting equipment. He was also ordered to surrender his Alaska big game guiding license for life.

In addition to the Alaska case, Martin was sentenced yesterday in a federal court in Juneau to federal charges as a result of the joint investigation dubbed "Operation Bruin." This investigation included Alaska Wildlife Troopers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environment Canada Wildlife Enforcement Directorate, Yukon Conservation Officer Service, Alberta Fish and Wildlife, Parks Canada, British Columbia Conservation Officer Service and the Public Prosecution Service of Canada. So far this operation has resulted in Martin, his brother, 64-year-old Haines resident John Katzeek, and Canadians Brian Hicken, 54, Kenneth Cox, 49, and Tyler Antal, 22, being charged with numerous federal hunting violations. In addition, Environment Canada and Canadian Crown prosecutors in Alberta and Yukon territories have charged approximately 17 people with 55 violations under the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International Interprovincial Trade Act.

Wildlife troopers in Haines, Juneau and the Wildlife Investigations Unit in Anchorage were a part of this multifaceted operation by serving search warrants in Canada and conducting numerous interviews with hunting clients in Alaska and the Lower 48. Without the cooperation from the different U.S. and Canadian agencies, this investigation would not be possible.

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