



The United States Attorney's Office

Central District of California



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JAPANESE MAN WHO SMUGGLED ENDANGERED BUTTERFLIES SENTENCED TO 21 MONTHS IN FEDERAL PRISON

A man from Kyoto, Japan was sentenced this morning to 21 months in federal prison for trafficking in rare and protected butterfly species in violation of United States laws and an international treaty that protects endangered species.

Hisayoshi Kojima, 57, was sentenced in Los Angeles by United States District Judge George P. Schiavelli. In addition to the prison term, Judge Schiavelli imposed a \$30,000 fine and ordered the defendant to pay \$7,656 in restitution to the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, which investigated the case.

Kojima pleaded guilty in January to 17 criminal charges related to the sale and smuggling of several butterfly species that he illegally exported to the United States. When he pleaded guilty, Kojima admitted, among other things, that he smuggled into the United States a pair of Queen Alexandra's birdwings, an endangered species that is the largest butterfly in the world.

Additionally, Kojima smuggled another pair of *Ornithoptera alexandrae* butterflies into the United States by means of fraudulent documents. Specifically, Kojima submitted a fraudulent Express Mail Service customs declaration that described a shipment as a gift of "dry butterfly" worth \$30, when in fact it consisted of two Queen Alexandra's birdwings that had been sold for \$8,500.

Kojima offered for sale the endangered Giant Swallowtail butterfly, an endangered species from Jamaica. The Giant Swallowtail butterfly, *Papilio homerus*, is the largest butterfly in the western hemisphere and is depicted on the \$1,000 Jamaican banknote.

Kojima smuggled other protected and endangered butterfly species into the United States. All of the species involved in the case are protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and most are protected by the federal Endangered Species Act.

Kojima pleaded guilty to five counts of Illegally offering to sell endangered species, five counts of importing wildlife contrary to law, five counts of smuggling wildlife and two counts of illegally importing endangered species.

This case is the result of an investigation by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement.

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