



NEWS RELEASE

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**TOGIAK MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR WASTING WALRUS
AND FIREARMS VIOLATIONS**

Anchorage, Alaska – U.S. Attorney Karen L. Loeffler announced today that a Togiak, Alaska, resident was sentenced yesterday for his actions arising from the illegal take of a walrus on Round Island in May 2011.

Sixty M. Arkanakyak, 49, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Sharon L. Gleason to a term of 30 months prison and three years supervised release. According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven E. Skrocki, who prosecuted the case, Arkanakyak, along with co-defendant Jessie Anariak, were indicted in December 2012. The indictment alleged that on May 9, 2011, Arkanakyak and co-defendant Anariak departed from the village of Togiak, Alaska, in a Lund skiff. After leaving Togiak, the men beached the skiff on Round Island, an island located within the Walrus Islands State Game Sanctuary and accessible to the public only by permit.

The defendant admitted that while on the beach, Arkanakyak and Anariak approached a herd of walrus which were hauled out on the beach. Arkanakyak admitted that both men, armed with .12 gauge shotguns, began shooting walrus and wounded approximately five. The herd stampeded and four wounded walrus escaped into the sea. Arkanakyak and Anariak then corralled one walrus against a cliff on the beach and shot it in the head with their shotguns until it died. According to Arkanakyak, the men then hacked the tusks off the walrus's skull and returned to their skiff without taking any of the meat or anything else from the dead walrus. Arkanakyak and Anariak then departed Round Island, taking the tusks with them and leaving the walrus on the beach to waste in violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

In February 2013, Arkanakyak plead guilty to illegally taking of a walrus from Round Island, as well as being a felon in possession of a firearm. Jessie Anariak's case remains pending.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Special Agent in Charge, Stanley Pruszenski stated, "The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service takes the wasteful killing of walrus solely for their tusks very seriously. This sentence reflects the seriousness of the offense. We hope this sentence deters others from similar acts of wastefulness."

Ms. Loeffler commends the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement, Refuge Law Enforcement and Alaska Wildlife Troopers who investigated this case.

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