

***U.S. Department of Justice***  
*United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales*  
*Distirct of New Mexico*

**Press Release**

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CONTACT: Elizabeth Martinez  
Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney  
Public Affairs Officer  
[elizabeth.martinez@usdoj.gov](mailto:elizabeth.martinez@usdoj.gov)  
505.224.1469

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**RUIDOSO MAN SENTENCED TO PROBATION AND FINED \$2,500 FOR  
TRESPASSING ON A NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE DURING ORYX HUNT**

ALBUQUERQUE – Kenneth Espinosa, 46, of Ruidoso, N.M., was sentenced this morning to a year of probation and ordered to pay a \$2,500 fine for trespassing on the San Andres National Wildlife Refuge. Espinosa’s sentence was announced by U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales and Nicholas E. Chavez, Special Agent in Charge of the Southwest Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement.

Espinosa and John Hughes, 51, also of Ruidoso, were separately charged with trespassing on National Wildlife Refuge System land, a misdemeanor offense, in Dec. 2010. According to the criminal complaints filed in those cases, Espinosa, Hughes and James Gladin, a 53-year old Georgia resident, unlawfully entered onto land that is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System on Jan. 7, 2006. Espinosa was convicted of this offense after a one-day bench trial on Dec. 14, 2011.

According to the evidence at trial, on Jan. 7, 2006, Hughes, the owner of Elite Outfitters, a Ruidoso-based company specializing in guided big-game hunting expeditions, and Espinosa, a guide employed by Elite Outfitters, were guiding Gladin on an Oryx hunting trip on the White Sands Missile Range when they entered the San Andres National Wildlife Refuge. Although the three men had been advised by officials that the Refuge was a closed area, they nevertheless entered the Refuge and parked their vehicle within the Refuge’s eastern boundary near Oñate Peak, located approximately 23 miles north of U.S. Highway 70 along the San Andres Mountains. During their expedition, Gladin killed a bull Oryx.

On Feb. 23, 2011, Hughes entered a guilty plea to the criminal complaint and was sentenced to five years of probation and fined \$2,500. Gladin, 53, who was cited by the U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service, paid a \$525 fine and forfeited the bull Oryx he had killed during the hunt.

The San Andres National Wildlife Refuge was established on Jan. 22, 1941, for the conservation and development of natural wildlife resources. It currently provides the best habitat for desert bighorn sheep in the state of New Mexico. “Our national wildlife refuges were established to help conserve important and sensitive species and habitat,” said Special Agent in Charge Nicolas E. Chavez of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Office of Law Enforcement Southwest Region. “Refuges are a national treasure, and willful illegal trespass is a serious matter.”

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Aaron O. Jordan of the U.S. Attorney’s Las Cruces Branch Office and was investigated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The Service enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies. For more information on its work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov). Connect with its Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/usfws](http://www.facebook.com/usfws), follow its tweets at [www.twitter.com/usfwshq](http://www.twitter.com/usfwshq), watch its YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from its Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.

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