



NEWS RELEASE

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**NENANA MAN SENTENCED TO SIX MONTHS IN PRISON FOR
ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING**

Anchorage, Alaska – U.S. Attorney Karen L. Loeffler announced today that a Nenana, Alaska, resident was sentenced for violating federal wildlife laws, including the Lacey Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Miles W. Martin, 61, was sentenced today by Chief U.S. District Court Judge Ralph R. Beistline to six months in prison. He pled guilty in March 2013, to four counts of a twenty-eight count indictment which charged Martin with wildlife trafficking involving the illegal sale of migratory birds, smuggling of wildlife, illegal sale of marine mammal parts and conspiracy

Along with his prison sentence, Martin's sentence banned him from selling wildlife parts for life, required him to relinquish to the United States more than 900 pounds of wildlife parts including lion, bear, walrus ivory, parts of seal, polar bear parts, and elephant ivory, and to pay a fine of \$6,500. He also received three years supervised release following his prison term.

Martin admitted to being involved in a lengthy and long term walrus ivory smuggling conspiracy, as well as to being involved in the smuggling of wildlife parts world-wide, and to the illegal sale of migratory bird parts.

Regarding his involvement in illegal walrus ivory sales, Martin admitted that from at least February 2010 and continuing up to March 9, 2011, he conspired with others to illegally purchase walrus tusks and walrus parts for illegal resale, transport, and export from the United States. Between July 2010 and March 2011, Martin's two co-conspirators traveled to Savoonga, Alaska, and purchased walrus tusks and parts taken from animals recently killed and tagged by individuals in Savoonga. The co-conspirators transported the walrus tusks and parts to their home in Glennallen, Alaska, and then transported some of those tusks and parts to Nenana, Alaska and Fairbanks where they transferred them to Martin. In August 2010, and as part of the conspiracy, Martin paid \$2,138 for the airline tickets and gave \$1,000 cash to the co-conspirators for their trip. Approximately 275 pounds of walrus tusks were purchased on that trip. In exchange for financing that trip, Martin received raw walrus tusks from the co-conspirators, and later illegally sold some of those tusks.

Martin illegally purchased at least 26 walrus tusks from the two co-conspirators who provided Martin with bogus "gift" letters, attempting to disguise Martin's illegal purchase of the walrus ivory. Martin and the other co-conspirators also attempted to dye the walrus tusks to make the tusks look like fossil ivory in an effort to conceal the illegality of the walrus tusk purchases and sales. Martin's plea agreement also detailed the sale of a walrus head (with tusks) to a customer in Argentina, and the smuggling of the walrus head out of the United States without the proper customs permits.

He also admitted the illegal sale of marine mammal parts to an undercover agent including: 20 seal claws; one polar bear tooth; one tooth offered for sale as a whale tooth which was a tooth of a seal or sea lion; polar bear teeth; fur; and various migratory bird parts.

Martin further admitted that in August 2010, he knowingly exported walrus ivory from Alaska to a customer in Denmark contrary to federal law, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and the Endangered Species Act. Martin on numerous occasions between May 2009 and April 2011, unlawfully sold and exported wildlife such as wolf, lion, lynx, and walrus parts, to customers outside the United States including the Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Italy, Australia, Belgium, Argentina, Denmark, Japan, Canada, Finland, Norway, Brazil, and Germany. Between May 2009 and April 2011, Martin exported at least 30 packages of wildlife parts without obtaining an export license, an International Trade in Endangered Species export permit or the necessary wildlife export documentation.

Between February 2007 and November 2012, Martin illegally purchased, sold, and exported wildlife parts and engaged in approximately 225 transactions totaling approximately \$58,000.

As noted in his sentence, Martin relinquished to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service more than 900 pounds of wildlife parts kept in his home. These parts included walrus parts, seal teeth, bear parts, bird parts, whale parts, and walrus ivory tusk tags from recently killed walrus. Some of the ivory tusk tags were still attached to small chunks of ivory, some of which had been dyed in order to make the raw ivory appear to be fossilized ivory and thus not prohibited for sale by the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

In court, Martin stated that his access to the internet facilitated his illegal wildlife trafficking and that he was out of the wildlife business for the rest of his life.

Karen Loeffler, United States Attorney for Alaska, noted that protection of our spectacular and special Alaskan wildlife and enforcement of the laws that govern and protect access to these animals is an important priority for law enforcement.

Stan Pruszenski of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement said, "Significant wildlife violations require significant punishment. This sentence will serve to deter others similarly inclined."

Ms. Loeffler commends the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement for the investigation of this case and the assistance provided from the Alaska Wildlife Troopers and the National Park Service.

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