

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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GAME MANAGEMENT AGENTS EXECUTING WARRANTS OR SUBPOENAS IN FIVE STATES FOR ORGANIZED BIG GAME HUNTING VIOLATIONS

Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton announced that his Department's game management agents, in company with State conservation officers, are executing warrants or subpoenas in five States today in related cases involving organized illegal hunting and interstate transportation of several protected big game species.

Warrants or subpoenas will be served in Montana, Alaska, Washington, California, and Wyoming on individuals who have been involved in these clandestine operations. Illegal hunts were organized for elk, polar bear, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, and the endangered California desert bighorn sheep. These enforcement actions culminate four months of Federal investigation in cooperation with fish and game agencies in the States involved.

Secretary Morton said that the agents, who are part of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, have gathered substantial evidence that a number of big game guides have been taking large fees from hunters who shoot and transport prized trophy animals without regard for State and Federal laws.

One of the Federal agents participated in several of the illegal hunts as an undercover man after information was received from a reliable source that these activities were taking place. The agent and his cooperator were together during these organized outings. The evidence gathered by these men uncovered a network and led to the multiple warrants or subpoenas announced today.

Names of persons being charged are being withheld pending an announcement by the Justice Department. The cases will be handled in Federal District Courts. State charges also will be filed.