

For immediate release
Nov. 4, 2010

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Virginia Man Fined for Violating Migratory Bird Treaty Act

A Virginia man pleaded guilty yesterday to violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act for unlawfully removing a red-shouldered hawk's nest with three hawk chicks while attempting to cut down a tree. One of the hawk chicks later died.

Jerry Stein, owner of AAA Complete Tree Service in Fredericksburg, Va., has been fined \$3,000 for the May 2010 incident.

According to court documents, Stein's company had been contracted to remove a tree from a property on Sebastian Road in Fredericksburg and was informed by the property owner that the tree contained a hawk's nest. On May 5, a neighbor heard chainsaws and discovered employees of AAA Complete Tree Service preparing to remove the tree. After being alerted to the presence of the nest, Stein's employees removed the nest and chicks from the tree and continued with the tree removal. The employees left the chicks and nest on the ground. A neighbor carried the nest and chicks to his property and contacted the Raptor Conservancy of Virginia, a non-profit organization, located in Falls Church, Va. that cares for injured raptors and, when the raptor is able to care for itself, releases them into the wild. The organization cared for the chicks since the incident and the two surviving chicks have since been released.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act makes it crime to possess, hunt or kill migratory birds, including their nests and eggs. Misdemeanor violations carry a maximum \$15,000 fine and six months in prison.

The investigation was conducted by Special Agent Mary French of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The case was prosecuted by George Metcalf, Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia.

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