

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Pacific Regional Office
911 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97232-4181
Phone: 503/231-6121
Fax: 503/231-2122
<http://pacific.fws.gov>

News Release



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Contact: Joan Jewett, 503-231-6211

Portland Furrier Admits Selling Fur Coats Made From Endangered Species

Following an investigation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a Portland, Oregon, furrier doing business as Nicholas Unger Furs pleaded guilty today to illegally selling a coat made from the pelt of an endangered jaguar.

In a plea agreement with the U.S. Attorney of Oregon, Horst Grimm agreed to pay a \$40,000 fine, half of which will go to the World Wildlife Fund North American Endangered Species Trafficking program. Grimm's company, U&S Furs, was placed on organizational probation for 18 months and agreed to conduct all its operations in accordance with all environmental and wildlife statutes and regulations.

"Jaguars are among the rarest of the world's species," said Chris Brong, the Service's Resident Agent in Charge for Oregon. "Selling coats from their pelts creates a market that in turn encourages the poaching of species that are on the brink of extinction or otherwise protected by federal law."

Grimm pleaded guilty to one count of violating the Endangered Species Act. In exchange for his plea, the government dropped two additional counts of violating the Endangered Species Act and nine counts of violating the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

The charges stem from a March 2005 investigation in which a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement agent, posing as an out-of-town customer, entered Grimm's store and was shown a coat made from leopard fur and one made from Alaska fur seal. A subsequent search of Grimm's records and inventory revealed a sales receipt for a jaguar coat sold in interstate commerce and other evidence of illegal sales of coats made from protected species. Agents seized three coats made of Alaska fur seal, two made of sea otter fur, one from harbor seal fur, one from jaguar fur, a leopard tail and miscellaneous scraps of fur from protected species.

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 544 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 63 Fish and Wildlife Management offices and 81 ecological services

field stations. The agency 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.

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