DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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WEST COAST DUCK BOOTLEGGERS
APPREHENDED BY AGENTS, FINED

A San Francisco restaurant owner and a wild duck bootlegger were fined $150 and $100, respectively, by Federal Judge Adolph St. Sure when the defendants pleaded guilty to charges of buying and selling wild game birds, officials of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, announced today.

This is the first time wildfowl bootleggers have been apprehended in the Golden Gate area since a wholesale roundup 2 years ago resulted in the conviction of 32 duck bootleggers and buyers.

The arrests were made by State Game Warden Lee Shea and a U. S. game management agent.

Fined were Chester E. Biancalana, proprietor of Chester's Cafe, and John C. Stull, alias Carl Merritt, a wildfowl bootlegger.

According to Assistant U. S. Attorney W. E. Licking, State Warden Shea received information that Chester's Cafe was buying wild ducks "over the counter." Calling in U. S. Agent Hugh M. Worcester as a witness, Shea and the Federal agent went to the San Francisco bar and waited untill Stull entered with a box containing 14 wild ducks.

When Biancalana accepted the birds and paid Stull, the two agents made the arrest. Later, 23 dressed wild ducks were found in Stull's car.

The birds were confiscated and given to charitable organizations.

W. E. Crouch, chief of the U. S. game agents, praised the work of State Warden Shea. "Isolated arrests of this type may seem insignificant to the average layman," he said, "but they are very important. Unless State and Federal agents are on the alert for these racketeers, large rings of wild duck bootleggers can spring up overnight."

Shea's apprehension of the two San Francisco bootleggers nipped in the bud what might have developed into another large-scale bootleg ring, Crouch said. "We cleaned out the Golden Gate area last year," he said, "and we want to keep it that way."