



News Release

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TEXAS MAN SENTENCED FOR TRAFFICKING IN HUMMINGBIRD CHARMS

Texas – A 53-year-old Dallas, Texas man was sentenced to four years of supervised probation and ordered to pay \$5,000 in fines and restitution for trafficking in dried hummingbird carcasses referred to as “chuparosas” on Tuesday, April 7, 2015.

Carlos Delgado Rodriguez (Delgado) plead guilty on August 27, 2014 to violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) after being charged with smuggling dead hummingbirds from Mexico. The indictment stated that Delgado unlawfully imported an estimated 61 dead hummingbirds, of various varieties, into the United States for sale from February 2013 through January 2014. The importation of dead humming birds violates the Convention on International Trade in endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the MBTA, the Lacey Act, the federal smuggling law, and Texas State Law.

Delgado, who worked in a “botanica” or shop specializing in herbs and charms, met with an undercover U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Special Agent on January 22, 2014, with the intent of selling dried “chuparosas,” or romantic good luck charms. Delgado sold the undercover agent thirty-five humming birds of four different species that had been captured, killed, dried, and preserved for \$770.

The hummingbird, a migratory bird, is protected by the MBTA. It is illegal for anyone to take, possess, import, export, transport, or sell a hummingbird, or its parts, nests, or eggs, except under the terms of a valid permit issued pursuant to Federal regulations.

Delgado admitted that he sold the hummingbirds without a valid permit or authorization, which is a felony under the MBTA.

“Hummingbirds serve important ecological roles as pollinators of a diverse array of wildflowers. Unfortunately, several familiar species, the Rufous, Allen’s, and Black-chinned Hummingbirds – are undergoing significant population declines or have been identified as highly vulnerable to climate change,” according to Dr. Pepper Trail, Senior Forensic Scientist and Ornithologist with the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon. He added, “The

Rufous Hummingbird populations, for example, declined by 62% between 1966 to 2010, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey.”

All three species - the Rufous, Allen’s, and Black-chinned hummingbirds - have been identified in “chuparosas” (dried hummingbird charms).

Delgado’s sentence includes the requirement that he make a \$1,000 restitution payment to the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund.

“This investigation demonstrates our commitment to combat illegal wildlife trafficking and bring justice to those that exploit protected resources for personal gain,” said Special Agent in Charge Nicholas Chavez of the Southwest Region. “The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to protecting these birds so that future generations of Americans are able to observe them in the wild.”

This case was investigated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jim Noble.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service.

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