



Department of Justice

United States Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2015

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FOUR PLEAD GUILTY IN SAN ANTONIO TO UNLAWFULLY SELLING MIGRATORY BIRDS

In San Antonio, four individuals await sentencing after pleading guilty to federal charges related to illegally selling migratory birds announced Acting United States Attorney Richard L. Durbin, Jr. and Special Agent in Charge Nicholas Chavez, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Southwest Region.

Appearing before Chief United States District Court Judge Fred Biery this morning, 50-year-old Jorge Rocha of Natalia, TX, pleaded guilty to one count of unlawfully offering to sell and selling migratory birds.

Previously, three other defendants—67-year-old Juan Luis Guerra of San Antonio; 56-year-old Francisco Guerrero of Cuero, TX; and, 60-year-old Tomas G. Perez of Devine, TX—pleaded guilty to the same federal charge. By pleading guilty, the defendants admitted to knowingly and unlawfully selling a migratory bird(s) to an undercover agent on various occasions in 2011 and 2012. Those birds included a Red-tailed Hawk and Great Horned Owls which are protected species under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

“One of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's highest priorities is to investigate individuals that are involved in the unlawful commercial trafficking of our Nation's fish and wildlife,” said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Special Agent in Charge Nicholas Chavez. “The successful outcome of this investigation is also the result of working jointly with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to ensure the protection of our migratory birds. With our law enforcement partnership, information sharing, and investigative technology, we can disrupt wildlife trafficking on the web, smuggling through our airports, or our land borders.”

All four defendants remain on bond pending sentencing scheduled later this year. Each defendant faces up to two years imprisonment and a maximum fine of \$2,000.

This indictment resulted from an investigation conducted by agents with the Southwest Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Assistant United States Attorney Bud Paulissen is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

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