

## **\$16,400 in Fines and Hunting Suspensions for Illegal Moose Hunt**

**NEWS**

April 2, 2014

Five Ontario men were fined a total of \$16,400 and received hunting license suspensions for an illegal moose hunt and an attempted cover up in 2011.

Jan Kuczek of Schomberg pleaded guilty to illegally party-hunting moose, failing to immediately attach a game seal, possessing wildlife illegally taken, buying game wildlife, selling game wildlife, depositing material on Crown land and unlawful possession of a trap. Kuczek received fines totaling \$5,000, was issued a one-year hunting suspension and cannot apply in the Moose Adult Validation Draw for an additional two years.

Jan Kaczor of Mississauga pleaded guilty to unlawfully transporting wildlife illegally taken, buying game wildlife and selling game wildlife. Kaczor received fines totaling \$3,000.

Mitchel Gillis of Caramat pleaded guilty to unlawfully hunting big game without a license and making a false statement to a conservation officer. Gillis received fines totaling \$1,500.

Larry Hooper of Caramat pleaded guilty to illegally party-hunting moose, possessing wildlife illegally taken, selling game wildlife and making a false statement to a conservation officer. Hooper received fines totaling \$5,000 and was issued a one-year hunting suspension.

Donald Pattison of Caramat pleaded guilty to possessing wildlife illegally taken, making a false statement to a conservation officer and selling game wildlife. Pattison received fines totaling \$1,900.

Court heard that in November 2011, Kuczek, Gillis and Hooper were moose hunting in the Gene Lake area near Caramat, referenced as Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 21B. The trio shot and killed two bull moose with only one bull tag for that area in Kuczek's possession. Gillis was un-licensed and Hooper had a bull tag for WMU 21A. One moose was removed from the kill site and taken to Pattison's residence in Caramat, where it was butchered. Kuczek, Gillis, and Kaczor returned to the kill site to retrieve the second bull moose which was cleaned, butchered and sealed at the site with Kuczek's bull tag. Kuczek and Kaczor paid Hooper for the moose that was tagged with his 21A bull tag in order to transport it to southern Ontario. Pattison bartered with Kuczek and Kaczor to receive a quarter of the moose in return for them using his residence.

During the investigation, charges were laid against Kuczek for dumping materials on Crown land at the kill site and possessing a trap that was taken as a souvenir from his hunting trip. Gillis, Hooper and Pattison were all charged for misleading statements to conservation officers in an effort to cover up the illegal activity. The investigation took over a year to complete and involved MNR conservation officers from Nipigon, Wawa and

Aurora Districts, MNR K-9 units and assistance from the Ontario Provincial Police. Five search warrants were executed to recover evidence which was subjected to DNA and forensic analysis. The moose meat and the trap were forfeited to the Crown.

Justice of the Peace Bernard Caron heard the case for Hooper and Pattison in the Ontario Court of Justice, Geraldton, on April 30, 2013. Justice of the Peace John Guthrie heard the case for Kuczek, Kaczor and Gillis in the Ontario Court of Justice, Geraldton, on March 25, 2014.

To report a natural resources violation, call 1-877-TIPS-MNR (847-7667) toll-free any time or contact your ministry office during regular business hours. You can also call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

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