

## CHRONIC POACHER TO PAY \$25,000 FOR CRIMES

A chronic poacher was ordered to pay \$25,000 in fines and restitution for killing several antlered big game animals without proper licenses between 2003 and 2008.

On March 4, Mike A. Hagerman, 47, of Upton, pled guilty to five violations of taking antlered big game animals without a license. The case started with a call from an informant to Newcastle Game Warden Dustin Shorma in March of 2008. Due to the complexity and size of the case, Wildlife Investigator Scott Adell was called in and the two officers started the long process of gathering additional evidence and formulating a plan.

The informant provided officers with information and photographs of deer that Hagerman allegedly killed over the last five years. Wildlife officers obtained a warrant and, with assistance by officers from the Upton Police Department and the Wyoming Highway Patrol, arrested Hagerman. He was held at the Weston County Detention Center.

When Game and Fish Department Wildlife Investigators Scott Adell and Jim Gregory questioned Hagerman, he confessed to killing several deer and antelope and two turkeys without a license. He said some of the animals were killed using his father's pioneer license and some were taken using his daughter's deer license. Investigators executed a search warrant of Hagerman's home and confiscated game meat and a personal computer. A consented search of his father's ranch in Upton revealed a mounted deer head and additional game meat. The evidence was submitted to the Wyoming Game and Fish forensics laboratory in Laramie for testing.



Test results determined the species and the gender of the animals and the total number of animals killed. Working in cooperation with the Weston County prosecutor, Hagerman was charged with six violations of taking antlered big game animals without a license and two counts of taking turkeys without a license. Hagerman said he was killing the game animals for food for his family, but Judge Stan Sheehan said he did not believe that claim because questioning by County Prosecutor Jim Peck revealed Hagerman shot only bucks and no does.



Hagerman pled not guilty during his initial court appearance and immediately retained an attorney. As part of a plea agreement, he pled guilty to five of the six big game charges. The other big game violation and both turkey charges were dismissed pursuant to the plea agreement. Hagerman was ordered to pay \$15,000 in restitution and \$10,000 in fines and his hunting privileges were suspended for 15 years. He was also sentenced to a 30-day suspended jail sentence and one year probation.

Investigator Adell said the case was especially disturbing because after killing the animals, Hagerman used students enrolled in Upton High School's Outdoor Recreation class to unknowingly butcher the poached animals. "Several of the animals were brought into the high school, where Hagerman is employed," Adell said. "These types of crimes don't just affect one person. When he brought these deer into the school, he brought more people into the case."

Officer Shorma said it is unfortunate that the school became an innocent victim. "This is a good school program and the students are learning a valuable skill. We encourage this kind of thing when it is done legally," he said.