

Illegal hunting penalties stiff

Hunters who shoot game in a National Park Monument can receive a stiff penalty under federal law for transporting the illegally killed animal. Penalties under the Lacey Act, which can range up to \$10,000 and a year in jail, can be imposed in addition to National Park Service Citations for illegal hunting.

If a guide or hunter has been cited by National Park Service officials for illegal hunting, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agents can file charges, if the animal has been moved.

"Clearly, we're not enforcing Park Service regulations against hunting in Park Monuments," says Keith Schreiner, Area Director for the Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska, "but we do have the responsibility under the Lacey Act to prosecute if someone transports an illegally killed animal."

Schreiner went on to say that "transport" includes air or ground transportation and is defined as "moving the animal." The kill does not have to be transported across state lines to be a federal offense.

Penalties under the Lacey Act include both civil and criminal. Under the law, a civil penalty of up to \$5,000 can be assessed anyone who "knowingly violates or who, in the exercise of due care, should know that he is violating," regulations. Criminal penalties can range up to \$10,000 and/or a year in jail, plus forfeiture of all equipment, including air craft, used by anyone who "knowingly and willfully violates," regulations.

"We're especially worried," says Schreiner "that hunters from the Lower 48, as well as Alaskans, may not know there

are very stiff penalties on top of the monument violations."

All guides and hunters are urged to check the land status where they are hunting to make sure the area is open and to be aware of the state and federal laws that apply.

The two Fish and Wildlife Monuments are open, but all 13 National Park Monuments are closed to sport hunting. All monuments are open to subsistence hunting in accordance with state laws.

For further information on monuments, call the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at 271-4243 in Anchorage or contact a field station in other areas.