



New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Public contact: Information Center (888)-248-6866
Media contact: Karl Moffatt (505) 476-8007
karl.moffatt@state.nm.us

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Trophy poachers face stiffer fines and increased jail time

SANTA FE – Trophy poachers who kill bighorn sheep, ibex, oryx, Barbary sheep, elk, deer or pronghorn antelope without a license or out of season just for the head or horns face increased fines and jail times if convicted.

Gov. Susana Martinez has signed legislation that elevates the crime of wasting game from a misdemeanor to a felony, which upon conviction carries a maximum prison sentence of 18 months and a fine of \$5,000. Convicted felons also no longer would be able to hunt with a firearm. As a felony, the statute of limitations on wasted game cases increases from two to five years. Out-of-state suspects in such cases also could face extradition under the new law.

“Over the last five years, I have worked closely with the department on this important legislation,” said Representative Alonzo Baldonado. “Our state’s conservation officers now have the added strength of this law to better protect New Mexico’s valuable wildlife resource for all citizens of New Mexico.”

The department also recognizes the invaluable support of Gov. Martinez, the State Game Commission and the many organizations and individuals that helped strengthen the state poaching law.

“We are pleased this bill was signed into law,” said commission chairman, Paul Kienzle. “Conserving New Mexico’s wildlife is our top priority and with these enhanced penalties our game wardens will have the tools needed to provide a greater level of protection.”

Game wardens with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish investigate up to 100 trophy poaching cases a year in which only the head or horns are removed and the rest the animal is left to rot. Hunters are required by law to utilize edible portions meat from harvested game animals.

For more information, please visit the department’s website, www.wildlife.state.nm.us. To report a poaching incident or other wildlife crime, please call the Department of Game and Fish toll-free Operation Game Thief hotline, 1-800-432-4263. Callers may remain anonymous and may be eligible for rewards if charges are filed.

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