

Jacob Hueftle, 22, of Broken Bow, pled guilty in federal court on April 4 to two counts of interstate transportation of illegally killed deer.

Following an investigation in which Hueftle and nine others committed scores of game violations, he made a plea agreement and paid a \$10,000 fine and forfeited two firearms.

Hueftle also was given five years federal probation, which bans him from hunting, fishing or trapping, or being in the company of anyone hunting, fishing or trapping in the United States.

Hueftle and nine others—five from Nebraska and two each from Kansas and Texas—paid a total of \$28,796 in fines and restitution in state and federal courts stemming from this investigation, which discovered violations that spanned one and a half years. All of the violations took place in Kansas and Nebraska.

The investigation began in December 2009 when Kansas game wardens served search warrants on several residences in Hays, Kan., after obtaining information of trophy deer being poached.

Nebraska conservation officers joined the investigation once it was learned that several suspects were Nebraskans.

Two video cameras, a computer, cell phones, several rifles, a bow and five large whitetail racks were seized. Interviews of the suspects revealed that the deer were killed at night using spotlights and firearms. Two deer were illegally tagged with archery permits and transported by Hueftle to Nebraska in violation of the federal Lacey Act.

Hours of video and photos were seized and analyzed, revealing countless game violations. Three large mule deer bucks were taken illegally in Nebraska and two of them were transported to Texas.

Other violations observed in the videos involved additional deer, waterfowl, turkeys, pheasants, raccoons, nongame birds, baiting, spotlighting, wanton waste, hunting from vehicles, over-bagging and permit violations.

A United States Fish and Wildlife Service special agent became involved with the Lacey Act violations and helped see the case to completion.

Other individuals involved and fines and restitution paid:

Cody Von Lintel, Kansas, \$2,025; Jared Bebb, Kansas, \$525; Jeffery Hubl, Lawrence, Neb., \$525; John Zutavern, Broken Bow, Neb., \$2,525; Chelsey Jones, Eddyville, Neb., \$1,198.

Two Nebraska minors paid \$750 and \$4,000, respectively. Two Texas minors paid \$2,525 and \$4,525, respectively.