



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT *of* JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office
District of Oregon

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Eugene Man Sentenced for Illegally Importing and Exporting Live Scorpions

MEDFORD, Ore.—A Eugene, Oregon man who formerly resided in Southern Oregon was sentenced in federal court today for violating the Lacey Act by illegally importing and exporting hundreds of live scorpions.

Darren Dennis Drake, 39, was sentenced to two years' federal probation, 250 hours of community service, and a \$5,000 fine payable to the Lacey Act Reward Fund.

According to court documents, between September 4, 2017 and March 21, 2018, Drake imported and exported dozens of live scorpions from and to contacts in Germany without first obtaining an import-export license from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). On one parcel intercepted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Drake falsely labeled the package contents as "chocolates." Drake also mailed or received several hundred live scorpions from other U.S. states, including Michigan and Texas, in violation of federal mailing laws.

On February 23, 2022, Drake was charged by criminal information with conspiracy to violate the Lacey Act. On March 14, 2022, he waived indictment and [pleaded guilty](#) to the single charge.

U.S. Attorney Scott Erik Asphaug of the District of Oregon made the announcement.

This case was investigated by the FWS Office of Law Enforcement with assistance from CBP and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. It was prosecuted by John C. Brassell, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for protecting America's wildlife from poaching, illegal commercialization, and other kinds of wildlife crime. If you have information related to a wildlife crime, please call 1-844-FWS-TIPS (1-844-397-8477) or email fws_tips@fws.gov.

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