



San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 30, 2017

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Abalone Poacher Barred from Coastline As City Attorney Protects Our Marine Resources

A poacher has been fined \$30,000 and is barred from San Diego's coastline in an environmental-protection case that began when concerned citizens reported the poacher taking abalone from waters in the South La Jolla State Marine Reserve.

Jeff Anthony Zeien, of Scottsdale, Arizona, pled guilty to taking and possessing the protected shellfish in two separate instances.

Under a plea agreement reached with the City Attorney's Office, Zeien will pay a \$30,000 fine and was placed on three years of probation, barred from obtaining a fishing license in the State of California, and ordered to forfeit the fishing gear seized from him.

In addition, Zeien must stay away from the Pacific Ocean within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of San Diego for three years. The stay-away order covers an area from Black's Beach North of La Jolla to the Zuniga Jetty off of Coronado, extending three miles out to sea.

Since 1998, it has been illegal to take or possess abalone in California waters south of San Francisco Bay due to dwindling populations.

Additionally, the area where Zeien was caught, the South La Jolla State Marine Reserve, is considered a "no take" area where the commercial or recreational taking of any living marine resource is prohibited. This area, and others across the State, were created to protect habitat and ecosystems as well as conserve biological diversity by providing a sanctuary for fish and other sea life.

"Protecting our marine resources is a priority for the City Attorney's Office, whether the threat comes from polluters or poachers," San Diego City Attorney Mara Elliott said. **"I applaud the concerned citizens who reported this illegal activity, and I encourage all San Diegans to be just as vigilant while they are enjoying our city's natural treasures."**

The case was prosecuted for the People of the State of California by Deputy City Attorney Cheryl Shitabata of the City Attorney's Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit.

Anyone who believes they are witness to unlawful hunting, fishing or pollution is encouraged to call CalTIP, California Department of Fish and Wildlife's confidential secret witness program, at (888) 334-2258 or send a text message to tip411. Both methods allow the public to provide wildlife officers with factual information to

assist with investigations. Callers may remain anonymous, if desired, and a reward can result from successful capture and prosecution.

[The City Attorney's Consumer & Environmental Protection Unit](#) (CEPU) maintains a Consumer Hotline at (619) 533-5600, which consumers can call to report fraud, waste or abuse. The duties of the CEPU include investigating and prosecuting false advertising, unfair business practice, theft, environmental and unlicensed activity cases.

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