

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

FOUR LOCAL SPEARFISHERMEN GIVEN 30 DAYS COUNTY JAIL AND \$1,000 FINE FOR POACHING FISH WITHIN BIG CREEK STATE MARINE RESERVE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that Dennis Marshall Lewis, age 23; Darryl Lycurgus Lewis, age 22; Daniel Gordon Gross, age 22; and Nicholas Ta, age 26, each entered a plea of no contest to taking fish within Big Creek State Marine Reserve. Monterey County Superior Court Judge Elisabeth K. Mineta placed each of the four men on 3 years of informal probation with terms and conditions to serve 30 days in county jail and each to pay a \$1,000 fine.

On March 19, 2018, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife received a tip via their CalTIP reporting program that people were spearfishing within Big Creek State Marine Reserve, where the take of any marine resource is strictly prohibited. The reporting party confronted the suspected poachers, who ultimately changed out of their wetsuits, packed up their equipment, and drove off in a truck.

Based on the license plate number and vehicle description provided by the reporting party, California Department of Fish and Wildlife Warden Byron Jones located the suspects and conducted an enforcement stop. The four men inside each admitted to spearfishing in the described area. Fifteen fish including sheephead fish, lingcods, vermilion rockfish, cabezons, and blue rockfish were found inside the bed of the truck.

Big Creek State Marine Reserve is a state marine protected area (“MPA”) that is part of a network of MPAs designed to enhance and protect the integrity of marine ecosystems. More information about MPAs is found here: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs>.

The public is encouraged to turn in poachers and polluters by calling 1-888-334-CalTIP. CalTIP (Californians Turn In Poachers and Polluters) is an anonymous tip program that helps the California Department of Fish and Wildlife protect the state’s fish and wildlife resources. More information about CalTIP is found here: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/enforcement/caltip>.

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