

# **\* NEWS RELEASE \***

## **SAN DIEGO MAN GIVEN \$5,002 FINE AND 240 HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR UNLAWFULLY POSSESSING A MOUNTAIN LION PELT AND CULTIVATING CANNABIS**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that on November 9, 2018 28-year-old Vincent Joseph DePhilippis entered a plea of no contest to unlawfully possessing a mountain lion pelt and cultivating more than six cannabis plants without a license. Monterey County Superior Court Judge Rafael Vasquez placed Mr. DePhilippis on three years of informal probation with terms and conditions including a \$5,002 fine, 240 hours of community service, a 3-year hunting ban, a search and seizure waiver, and forfeiture of any seized wildlife.

On September 21, 2017, a search warrant executed by Monterey County Sheriff's Office deputies and California Department of Fish and Wildlife ("CDFW") wardens revealed an unlicensed and unpermitted commercial cannabis operation on a private residence on Argyle Road. Six hundred and eighty-nine outdoor cannabis plants were found, collected, and destroyed. Mr. DePhilippis was found at the residence. He informed law enforcement that the property owner allowed him to live on the property free of charge in exchange for tending to the cannabis plants.

Law enforcement discovered a mountain lion pelt inside Mr. DePhilippis' bedroom, and a shucked abalone inside a freezer. Both items were seized as evidence.

In 1990, California voters passed the California Wildlife Protection Act (Proposition 117) that designated the mountain lion as a "specially protected mammal," making it unlawful to possess, transport, import, or sell any mountain lion or part or product thereof unless authorized by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. More information about mountain lions in California is found here: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Mountain-Lion>.

Monterey County Sheriff's Office deputies and California Department of Fish and Wildlife wardens investigated the unlawful cannabis cultivation operation. Warden Kaleb Eye investigated the wildlife crimes in this case.

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