



ANTHONY G. BROWN, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Frederick County Hunter Pleads Guilty, Ordered to Pay Restitution for Poaching

**BALTIMORE, MD (September 26, 2024)** – Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today announced that Michael K. Hines pleaded guilty in the Circuit Court for Frederick County to one count of hunting mammals during closed season. The Honorable Judge Richard Sandy ordered restitution in the amount of \$5,000 to be paid to the State Wildlife Management and Protection Fund for conservation efforts throughout the State, 80 hours of community service, and a criminal fine in the amount of \$1,000 for illegally harvesting a trophy deer.

“Maryland hunters understand the rules about when, where, and how they can hunt. When someone breaks those rules, they're cheating and harming Maryland’s conservation efforts,” said Attorney General Brown. “This case shows our dedication to protecting the state’s resources.”

“Illegal poaching takes Marylanders’ rightful natural resources away from law-abiding hunters and will not be tolerated under any circumstance,” said Natural Resources Police Superintendent Orlando Lilly. “We are proud of our hardworking officers for identifying those who disregard our laws and appreciate the work of the Office of the Attorney General for prosecuting this case to the fullest extent.”

On November 11, 2023, Natural Resources Police (NRP) launched an investigation into the illegal harvest of a trophy white tailed deer after receiving a tip that Michael Hines had illegally killed a large buck with a firearm. This incident occurred during bow season. Hunting or harvesting by any other manner during bow season is prohibited by state law, Natural Resources Article §10-404, and is considered poaching. The investigation revealed that, on the evening of November 10, 2023, Mr. Hines shot and killed the buck using a rifle. Mr. Hines took photographs of himself with the buck and posted them to the social media page “Maryland Bowhunters.” Mr. Hines subsequently removed the deer’s head and neck from the body, disposed of the carcass in a thicket, and took the head and antlers to a local taxidermist. The carcass, eventually recovered by NRP officers, showed two circular gunshot holes, indicating that the deer had been shot with a firearm and not a crossbow. The head and antlers of the buck were later recovered.

Under Natural Resources Article §10-1101.1, a person convicted of poaching deer on any land in the State is required to pay restitution to the State Wildlife Management and Protection Fund. The standardized Boone and Crockett Club scoring methodology, used to evaluate the size of antlers, determines the amount of restitution. The antlers recovered during the course of this investigation were evaluated and received a gross total score of 169 1/8. A person convicted of poaching an antlered white-tailed deer that obtains a score of more than 150 gross inches “shall pay restitution of not less than \$5,000 but not exceeding \$10,000, in an amount deemed reasonable by the court; and perform 80 hours of community service.” See Natural Resources §10-1101.1(b)(2).

In making today’s announcement, the Attorney General recognizes the work of the Maryland Natural Resources Police, in particular Officer Charles Faith, and the Attorney General’s Environmental and Natural Resources Crimes Unit Chief Counsel D’Arcy Talley and Assistant Attorneys General Suzannah Sturgell and Kory H. Lemmert, who prosecuted this case.

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