

Caught on Camera

On December 15, 2011 Kaycee game warden Kyle Lash was contacted by Glenrock game warden Gary Boyd regarding some hunting violations that occurred during a mountain lion hunt which took place in Kaycee, Wyoming during the 2010 mountain lion hunting season. Warden Boyd stated the violation was discovered through the stop poaching program from a concerned Colorado hunter who observed a video of the mountain lion hunt on the Sportsman Channel. The video, also on YouTube, was titled, "Live the Wildlife Episode 11: Wyoming Mountain Lion Hunt." After uploading and watching the recorded hunt, wardens Boyd and Lash documented several violations that occurred during the hunt.



The video begins with celebrity hunter Gus Congemi coming to the Kaycee area in pursuit of a mountain lion with his bow. He was outfitted/guided by Kody Glause of Heart Spear Outfitters in Glenrock, along with Morgan Forbes, Sandy Bob Forbes, and Dennis Hepp, all residents of Kaycee. The first violation observed on the video was the failure to wear fluorescent orange clothing by Congemi. The video then goes on as the dogs run a mountain lion into a cave, and shows Congemi, Glause, and other party members arriving at the cave and discussing a course of action on how to take the lion. Once in the cave, Congemi claimed he couldn't shoot the lion with a bow; therefore, the group utilized handguns that had been carried along during the hunt. The guns used included a semi-auto .45 ACP 1911 pistol with a laser grip (belonging to Morgan Forbes) and a semi-auto Glock pistol, .357 SIG (belonging to Dennis Hepp). Both handguns are illegal calibers for the taking of trophy game since neither firearm meets the requirements of Wyoming Statute 23-3-111(a) or Wyoming Game and Fish Commission Regulation Chapter 32. The laser on the 1911 handgun is considered artificial light and, is therefore, illegal to use for taking trophy game. The video then shows Morgan Forbes and Gus Congemi entering the cave with the above mentioned pistols to kill the mountain lion. At this point in the video, Congemi was carrying the 1911 with the laser, while Forbes carried the Glock. Approximately ten shots were fired and the hunters came out of the cave with the dead mountain lion.

As required by law, Glenrock game warden Boyd registered the mountain lion in January of 2010 for Gus Congemi. Kody Glause was also present when the lion was registered. According to warden Boyd, the description of the hunt at the time it was registered was very different than what was documented by the video. Both Glause and Congemi told Boyd that Congemi used Glause's .44 magnum handgun to harvest the mountain lion (the .44 magnum cartridge qualifies as a legal caliber for taking trophy game).

After discussing the violations seen on the video, wardens Lash and Boyd interviewed all involved individuals whom confirmed the video was accurate and confessed to the violations. Outfitter Kody Glause and guide Morgan Forbes pled guilty to accessory to taking trophy game with an illegal firearm and failure of an outfitter/guide to report a violation. Each paid \$730 for these two violations. In addition, Kody Glause paid a \$300 fine for making a false statement on his outfitter records, as Glause failed to record the Congemi mountain lion hunt on his 2010 outfitter records. Celebrity hunter Gus Congemi pled guilty to failure to wear fluorescent orange clothing while hunting trophy game and using an illegal firearm for taking a trophy game animal. Congemi did not receive a monetary fine but was required, under the judgment and sentencing against him, to forfeit the illegally taken mountain lion pelt and skull to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Congemi was also required to go on the TV show "Live the Wildlife" and explain the illegal activity which occurred in "Episode 11 - Wyoming Mountain Lion Hunt."