

Hunter fined after 'best day ever' boast showed he shot protected birds

Nicola Donnelly – 04 February 2017 02:30 AM



Licensed hunter Richard Hanna was unaware that the birds he shot were protected species

An experienced hunter was caught with the carcasses of two protected birds in his freezer after he boasted about shooting them by posting photos on Facebook.

Richard Hanna (38), who is a registered gun holder but not a licensed wildlife dealer, said he genuinely did not believe the brent goose and shelduck were protected species.

He claimed he was out hunting and acknowledged he discharged two shots in an area where he saw "about 600 geese".

"I thought all my birthdays had come at once as I killed six birds with two shots," Hanna told Balbriggan District Court.

Broadcast

"I put photos up on Facebook as I was only out hunting for half-an-hour and thought I had my best day hunting. If I knew I did something illegal I wouldn't have broadcast it to the world."

He said he now accepts two of the six birds he shot were protected species, but that he "genuinely made a mistake that day".

The court heard the National Parks & Wildlife Service was notified of the Facebook photos and three conservation officers searched Hanna's premises.

They located the brent goose and shelduck in a freezer in the back shed and seized and preserved the birds.

Hanna subsequently rang the department and told them he believed they were Canada geese, which is not a protected species.

The court heard Hanna has a deer hunting licence and is a registered gun holder.

Hanna, of Ringsford Close, Balrothery, Co Dublin, pleaded guilty to being in possession of the protected wild birds while not being a licensed wildlife dealer.

Defence solicitor Morgan Redmond told the court the defendant acknowledged shooting the birds and putting the photos up on Facebook.

Similar

"He was unaware they were protected species and it is accepted by the prosecution that he thought the birds were Canada geese," said Mr Redmond.

"He fired off two shots and the birds were killed in the process."

Judge Dempsey was shown pictures of the brent goose and a Canada goose and accepted they appeared similar as both are black and white.

A conservation ranger told Judge Dempsey that the brent goose and Canada goose are "closely related" and are about the size of an adult duck.

"But the brent goose is hard to confuse with a Canada goose," the ranger added.

Judge Dempsey convicted and fined Hanna €100 for each offence.

When he granted a destruction order for the birds, Hanna asked if he could have one of them to have it stuffed.

The state solicitor informed him he could not as he would require special permission to get it stuffed and Judge Dempsey said the destruction order stands.

<https://www.herald.ie/news/courts/hunter-fined-after-best-day-ever-boast-showed-he-shot-protected-birds-35422626.html>