

Man Charged with Possessing Rare Ocelots

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service raided New York home.

Federal authorities have charged a New York man with illegal possession of two rare spotted cats.

Glenn Donnelly is scheduled to face a federal judge Aug. 25 in Portland, Ore., for purchasing two ocelots.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service confiscated illegal items from his Weedsport, N.Y., home, but the agency has not released the details of the search warrant, according to Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman Joan Jewett.

Donnelly reportedly told the federal Department of Agriculture that Portland resident Deborah Walding had given him the two oversized cats. Walding has since been convicted of illegal ocelot trafficking and sent to prison.

Donnelly was one of eight parties slapped with federal charges or civil fines through Operation Cat Tale, a national investigation that uncovered a multi-state endeavor to sell endangered animals that resulted in five criminal cases.

All but Donnelly have reached plea agreements. The fines for the individuals ranged from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Through the operation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service seized five ocelots, including two that died while being transported. The animals were sold for nearly \$5,000 each, investigators have said.

Only 70 ocelots remain in the wild across the country, according to Fish and Wildlife data. The cats have been protected by U.S. and international laws for more than 30 years.

Posted: August 09, 2006, 5 a.m. EST