

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Sentenced To Prison For Endangered Sea Turtle Violation

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ST. THOMAS -- District Court Judge Curtis V. Gomez on December 4 sentenced Kisean Anthony Testamark, 44, also known as Sean Anthony Penn, of Coki Point, to 45 days in prison and five years of supervised release for possession and transportation of a green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe announced. Judge Gomez also ordered Penn to perform 200 hours of community service.

On July 29, 2015, Penn pleaded guilty to possession and transportation of the green sea turtle, which is an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act.

Court records show that on September 16, 2013, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Marine Interdiction Unit was conducting routine border security patrol when Penn was observed in a small boat. The agents attempted to intercept Penn, but he maneuvered his boat close to the shoreline in an area where the agents' vessel could not enter. Subsequently, after Penn complied with the agents' directive and pulled his boat alongside the agents' vessel, the agents saw a red cooler in Penn's boat. When asked what was in the cooler, Penn dumped the contents of the cooler into the ocean. A diver from Coral World was recruited to search the area where Penn dumped his cooler, and recovered a decapitated green sea turtle with its shell removed.

This case was investigated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement, the United States Customs and Border Protection, the Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources, and the Virgin Islands Police Department. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Nelson L. Jones.

Feature Image: Chelonia mydas.

Image Credit: Wikipedia.