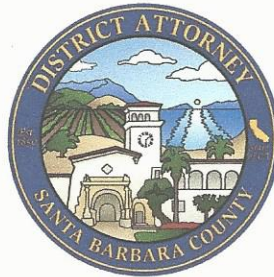


OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
JOYCE E. DUDLEY
District Attorney



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July 24, 2015
RELEASE DATE
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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

July 24, 2015

Re: 2014 Wildlife Prosecutor of the Year

District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that the California Fish and Game Commission recently recognized Deputy District Attorney Kevin Weichbrod of Santa Barbara County for his exemplary dedication to the prosecution of wildlife crimes. He was selected as one of three from the ranks of California's 58 counties to receive this notable distinction.

The 2014 Wildlife Prosecutor of the Year Award was presented on July 7, 2015, to these outstanding prosecutors amongst their peers at the California District Attorneys Association annual summer conference in Napa.

"We do our best to thoughtfully craft regulations to protect California's fish and wildlife resources and those who violate those regulations are destroying the natural resources that belong to all of us," said Commission President Jack Baylis. "Successful prosecutions of poaching and pollution cases are directly dependent upon the working relationships between officers and the prosecutors. Thanks to these prosecutors, justice is served to those who violate the law."

The selection process was based upon recommendations from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Law Enforcement Division, who regularly work with the various District Attorneys' offices. All three prosecutors came highly recommended by the respective wildlife officers from their counties. These three prosecutors understand and appreciate natural resource violations. They have shown a willingness to pursue felony charges when appropriate for the most egregious violators. These prosecutors regularly took on time-consuming, tough cases and have followed the cases to the full extent, up to and including jury trials.

Deputy District Attorney Weichbrod's award was based upon the prosecution of John Anthony Wilson who pled to four felony counts of grand theft of aqua-cultural product. The case arose from a California Fish & Wildlife investigation whereby Mr. Wilson was caught stealing crabs from other fishermen's holding tanks in the Santa Barbara harbor on multiple occasions. In addition to his felony plea, Mr. Wilson pled to five misdemeanor Fish & Game Code and California Code of Regulations violations stemming from his conduct of: fishing species out of season, failing to service traps within the appropriate amount of time, and failing to maintain proper accounting records and landing receipts of his commercial catch. Mr. Wilson would then transport and peddle his stolen or undocumented catch at the Hollywood and local fish markets. Deputy District Attorney Kevin Weichbrod stated, "This case demonstrates Santa Barbara County's dedication to our fishing community, and to those fishermen who do their utmost to abide by all the laws and regulations in the course of their profession that help protect our local resources."

District Attorney Dudley commended Mr. Weichbrod by stating, "Kevin has consistently done an exceptional job on his cases. He is also the consummate team player who seeks collaboration and justice."

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