



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Marine Patrol aids in arrest of BSL man

BILOXI, Miss. – Marine Patrol officers with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources helped execute a federal search warrant on a Bay St. Louis man early Wednesday morning.

Lonnie Ray, 46, owner and operator of Cowart's Seafood, was found to be in violation of the Lacey Act, a federal law relating to the unlawful import, export, selling or purchasing of fish, wildlife and plants.

Hancock County narcotics investigators charged Ray with cultivation of a controlled substance, which is a felony. The search revealed marijuana, paraphernalia and documents supporting the Lacey Act violation. Law enforcement also confiscated guns from the business.

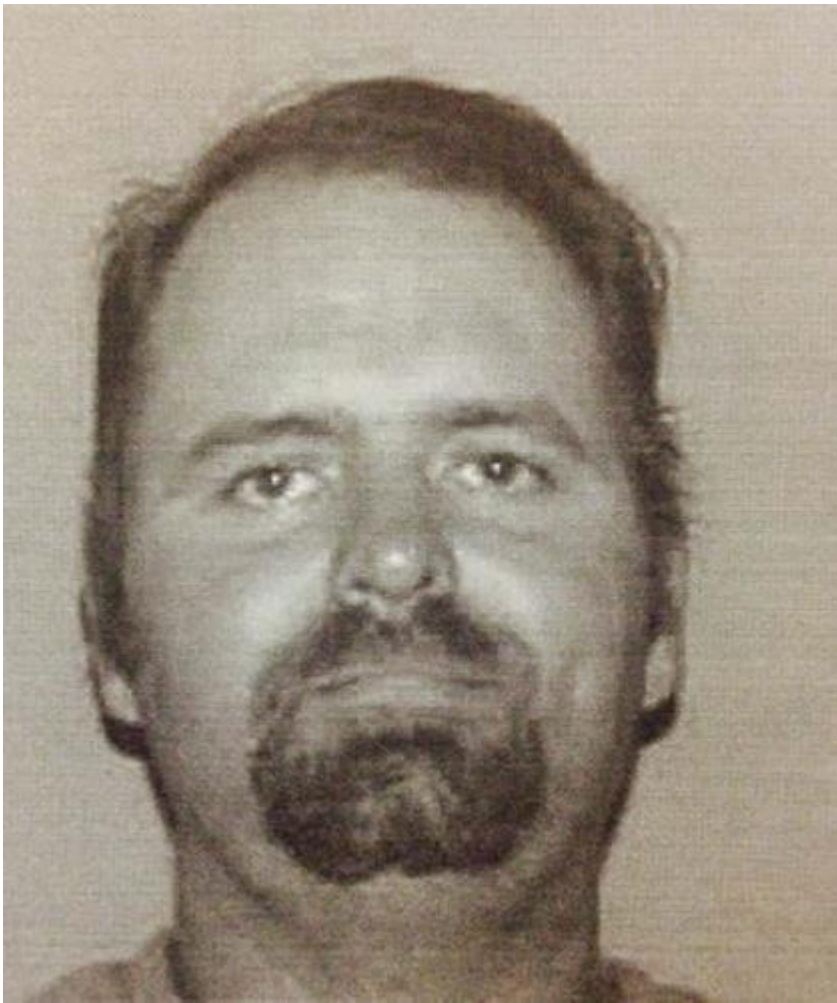
Law enforcement agencies involved in the search included MDMR Marine Patrol, NOAA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and the Hancock County Sheriff's Office.

The federal investigation has been ongoing for about 10 months and is continuing. More charges are expected, said Keith Davis, chief of Marine Patrol.

"This resource is very important to the economy of the state of Mississippi," Davis said. "We want to make sure everyone adheres to the laws set forth by the Legislature so we can protect and conserve this valuable resource."

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.

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