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**TWO DEFENDANTS SENTENCED IN “OPERATION STONE DUCK”
FOR METHAMPHETAMINE SALE AND ILLEGAL DEER HUNTING**

Dunn Lampton, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi, announced the sentencing this afternoon of MARK NECAISE a/k/a “Scope” of Kiln, Mississippi, and SAMUEL NECAISE of Picayune, Mississippi, by Senior United States District Judge David C. Bramlette in federal court in Natchez, Mississippi. MARK NECAISE was sentenced to 10 years and 1 month on two counts relating to the sale of methamphetamine and four wildlife violations related to the illegal spotlighting and killing of Whitetail deer. SAMUEL NECAISE was sentenced to 3 years and 10 months on one count of sale of methamphetamine and two wildlife violations. Both previously pled guilty to all charges.

“Operation Stone Duck” is an ongoing joint investigation involving the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, the U. S. Attorney’s Office (USAO) and federal agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). The investigation initially focused on the illegal taking of trophy Whitetail deer and migratory game birds in Mississippi. The investigation also uncovered the sale of drugs as well as possession and manufacturing of automatic weapons. Most of the illegal spotlighting of trophy bucks occurred on Panther Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, John C. Stennis Space Center, private property and other state and

federal lands. Many of the Whitetail bucks were killed during the closed season. The investigation remains ongoing.

On October 17, 2007, federal and state agents executed numerous federal search warrants and arrested MARK NECAISE, SAMUEL NECAISE and JOHN W. CUEVAS, JR. Approximately 80 firearms and 55 mounted Whitetail bucks were seized along with three vehicles. Drugs were also found at one location.

On February 26, 2008, John W. Cuevas, Jr. pled guilty to one felony relating to illegal possession of a firearm on the premises of John C. Stennis Space Center and five misdemeanor wildlife violations. Cuevas was sentenced on April 22, 2008, by U.S. District Judge David Bramlette to three six month terms of imprisonment, one year of supervised release, and a fine of \$3500.

Neal Necaize of Picayune was indicted on February 5, 2008, for manufacturing and possessing illegal machine guns. He entered a guilty plea on April 15, 2008, and is awaiting sentencing on July 10, 2008, before U.S. District Judge Keith Starrett in Gulfport, Mississippi.

U.S. Attorney Dunn Lampton said that today's sentences should serve as a warning. "We will do everything we can to put away drug dealers and those who illegally kill wildlife. Today's sentences should send a strong warning that state and federal agencies are working together to put criminals in prison and keep them there." said Lampton.

"The sentencing of the subjects in this investigation today should send a clear message that selling drugs and poaching on a National Wildlife Refuge and other private lands will have serious consequences" said Robert T. Oliveri, Resident Agent in Charge with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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