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## **In Kamchatka Territory, 11 members of criminal group jailed for illegal catching of gyrfalcons**



A court has recognized the evidence gathered by the Kamchatka Territory Office of the Investigative Committee as sufficient to convict 11 members of a criminal group. All of them were found guilty of illegal catching and keeping of especially valuable wild animals that are documented in the Red Book – birds of prey – gyrfalcons under Part 3 of Article 258.1 of the RF Criminal Code.

The court and investigators have established that from June to 11 November 2016, an organized group of 11 people divided in two teams (5 and 6 people) violated the federal legislation by catching 17 gyrfalcons in Yaavn Lagoon and Shlyupochnaya Bay in Olyutorsky District, Kamchatka Territory to sell them. They illegally kept the birds until they were found and seized by law enforcers. Organizer of the crime who is now wanted had provided the group with everything necessary to catch and keep the gyrfalcons, directed both teams via satellite communication while he was outside Kamchatka Territory.

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The investigation against the wanted organizer of the crime is ongoing.

The group's crimes caused the Russian Federation a damage of 18 million 700 thousand rubles. Having been seized and examined by ornithologists the birds were released in their natural habitat. A lot of catching gear, guns and ammunition, communication means, devices for keeping birds and all necessary for living isolated from settlements were seized from the perpetrators.

Leaders of the two teams made deals with the investigators and cooperated actively to find out all the circumstances surrounding the crime, identify all members of the organized group and their roles in the crime.

The court has given those two suspended sentences of 2 years in prison and 2 years of probation each. 4 members of the group got suspended sentences of 3 years in prison and 4 other suspended sentences of 2.5 years in prison. The youngest of the accused, a 23-year-old resident of Simferopol, who had been convicted of a major crime (robbery, purchase and storage of drugs) and had not served the full time for it, was sentenced to 2.5 years in a maximum-security prison for repeated commission of a major crime.

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