



March 27, 2023

## Two Fishermen Plead Guilty On Criminal Charges for Cheating During the Lake Erie Walleye Trail Tournament

CLEVELAND - Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley announced that Jacob Runyan, 43, and Chase Cominsky, 36, pleaded guilty for Cheating and the Unlawful Ownership of Wild Animals during the Lake Erie Walleye Trail tournament in September 2022.

"This plea is the first step in teaching these crooks two basic life lessons," said Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley. "Thou shall not steal, and crime does not pay."

According to an investigation conducted by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), on September 30, 2022, Jacob Runyan and Chase Cominsky competed at the Lake Erie Walleye Trail tournament near North Marginal Road and Lakeshore Boulevard in Cleveland. The tournament hosted fishermen from several surrounding states that competed to see which team could catch five of the heaviest walleye fish in Lake Erie. If Runyan and Cominsky had won this tournament, they would have received a total prize of \$28,760.

The director of the tournament noticed Runyan and Cominsky's walleyes weighed more than they looked and sliced open the fish. Ten weights were located inside the walleyes, eight weighing 12 ounces and two weighing eight ounces along with several walleye filets. The two were immediately disqualified and instructed to leave the tournament. The Cleveland Metroparks Police Department responded to the scene.

Jacob Runyan and Chase Cominsky pleaded guilty to the following charges:

- **One count of Cheating** (felony of the fifth degree with forfeiture of the boat used in the fishing tournament that was seized on October 11, 2022)
- **One count of Unlawful Ownership of Wild Animals** (misdemeanor of the fourth degree)

They will be sentenced on May 11.