

Summary: Coercion and Sexual Abuse by a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Official in Oregon

Report Date: February 4, 2020

Report Number: 18-0977

The OIG investigated an allegation that Eric Rickerson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) State Supervisor, Lacey, WA, sexually assaulted an FWS employee while the two were at an FWS conference. The assaulted employee said that she, Rickerson, and another male FWS employee shared a cabin with two bedrooms and a loft at the resort. The employee alleged that Rickerson came to her loft bedroom uninvited, exposed himself, and touched her inappropriately.

We found that Rickerson entered the employee's loft bedroom uninvited four times during the night, exposed himself to her multiple times, climbed into her bed naked, and touched her in a sexual manner more than once without her permission.

We referred our findings to the Deschutes County District Attorney and on October 29, 2019, Rickerson pleaded guilty to felony coercion and misdemeanor sex abuse, harassment, intimidation, and private indecency. Rickerson was sentenced to 30 days in jail and 36 months supervised probation. He also must register as a sex offender and pay the employee \$5,856.07 in restitution.

The FWS suspended Rickerson without pay during the investigation and he resigned from his position with the FWS on November 5, 2019. This is a summary of the report we provided to the FWS Director.