

Man gets 3 months for smuggling dinosaur skeleton

June 3 2014

A New York federal judge has sentenced a Virginia fossils dealer to three months in prison for smuggling a 70-million-year-old Tyrannosaurus skeleton out of Mongolia.

Eric Prokopi (proh-KAHP'-ee) also must serve three months community confinement.

Prokopi formerly lived in Gainesville, Florida, and now resides in Williamsburg, Virginia. The government says he smuggled bones from the Gobi Desert into the U.S. and then assembled them.

A prosecutor said Tuesday that Prokopi provided substantial support to investigators, helping them recover at least 18 fossils. The Probation Department had recommended he serve more than two years in prison.

The dinosaur skeleton was sold by Dallas-based Heritage Auctions for more than \$1 million. The government said the skeleton was mislabeled as reptile bones from Great Britain. The sale was suspended and the skeleton returned to Mongolia.

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Citation: Man gets 3 months for smuggling dinosaur skeleton (2014, June 3) retrieved 26 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-06-months-smuggling-dinosaur-skeleton.html>

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