

Accidental Elk Hunter Speaks Out

(KAIR)--It was the first day of deer hunting season in Atchison County, and resident Mike Penning, on Wednesday, just south of Atchison, fired a shot that he thought was bringing down a huge buck commonly referred to as "the monster buck."

Instead, the kill turned out to be an elk.

"When you're out hunting deer in this territory, I don't think many deer hunters are going to hesitate when they see the antlers and all and going to think is that an elk or a deer because, in this territory, there were no elk," Penning says.

Initially excited for what he thought would turn out to be a prized trophy of the hunting season, Penning realized, when examining the animal, that it was not a deer.

Thinking, but not knowing for certain that it might be an elk, Penning called the game warden, who made the confirmation. Citing Penning for shooting an elk without a permit, he returned the next day to the kill site, where Penning says he was told by the Warden that the misidentification was clearly a mistake.

The citation is currently under the review of the Atchison County Attorney, but Penning hopes it will be dismissed. "I thought since it was an accident, and believed it was a deer, and since I voluntarily called in to admit my mistake, I thought everything would go well," Penning says. "I don't know if I'll have a fine, or what the deal."

The elk has been processed and the meat will be donated to the less fortunate.

Although there is a herd of Elk in Kansas, kept at Fort Riley, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism officials say it remains unclear why the animal was in Atchison County.

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