

DRI seizes 8,000 kg of shark fins

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has smashed an international wildlife smuggling racket with the seizure of about 8,000 kg of shark fins in Mumbai and the coastal town of Veraval in Gujarat. Four persons, including the mastermind, have also been arrested.

According to the DRI, the consignments were meant to be illegally exported to China and Hong Kong. The fins were procured from the seas along the coasts of Ratnagiri and Mumbai in Maharashtra, and Veraval and Okha in Gujarat.

They are used for preparing "shark fin" soup in China and Vietnam. Usually served on special occasions such as weddings and banquets, it is considered a luxury food item and is of immense significance, with one bowl of soup costing at least \$100.

Acting on a tip-off that some exporters were indulging in the trans-border smuggling of fins of various species of sharks, the agency mounted surveillance and zeroed in on the suspects. The fins were to be smuggled out on the pretext of exports of dried ray skins, dried marine products, and fish maw, to evade detection.