

Guinea seizes shark fins from Chinese ships

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Sharks fins are considered a delicacy in Asia

Guinea has seized a haul of shark fins and carcasses from Chinese ships fishing illegally off the coast of the west African country and fined the owners.

The seizure was part of a push launched in February to crack down on [illegal fishing](#) in West African waters, aided by the environmental campaign group Greenpeace.

"Three ships were boarded and searched, two for having [shark fins](#) on board," Demba Guisse, the director of Guinea's national fishing monitoring body, told AFP late Tuesday.

With its vessel "Esperanza", Greenpeace is working with local officials from six African countries to monitor the waters off their coasts.

Guinean inspectors discovered 30 bags of shark carcasses including a huge hammerhead—an endangered species—on one of the ships.

The two vessels with shark fins aboard—some discovered on the roof or stashed between crates—were each fined around \$265,000, Greenpeace said.

Both are owned by Dalian Lian Run Pelagic Fishery Company Ltd, which Greenpeace said is one of China's largest distant [water](#) fishing outfits.

Sharks are particularly vulnerable to overfishing, with around 100 million killed each year, Greenpeace said.

Global conservation efforts are complicated by the high prices fetched by shark fins, considered a delicacy in Asia where they are served for special occasions like weddings and banquets.

Greenpeace and authorities from neighbouring Guinea Bissau last month stopped four ships for various infractions including the use of unauthorised equipment.

"What we're seeing here is an utter lack of respect for West African fishing laws," said Greenpeace campaigner Ahmed Diame.

Illegal fishing in Guinea has risen sharply in recent years, with the hauls

rising from 40,000 tonnes in 2010 to more than 150,000 in 2015.

Most of the over 40 vessels currently licensed to operate in Guinean waters are Chinese-owned.

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