



## Department of Environmental Conservation

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### **DEC: FIRST SUCCESSFUL SHARK FIN CASE RESULTS IN GUILTY FELONY PLEA**

#### **First Case to Conclude Under NY's New Shark Fin Ban**

The Brooklyn-based Long Quan Seafood Corp. pleaded guilty to felony commercialization of wildlife on June 22 in Brooklyn Criminal Court and paid a \$10,000 fine for trafficking in shark fins, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Acting Commissioner Marc Gerstman announced today.

"This is the first successful prosecution under a New York State law that took effect last July banning the possession, sale and distribution of most species of shark fins in New York State," Acting Commissioner Gerstman said. "Not only is the practice of finning a shark inhumane, but it negatively impacts the natural balance of the oceanic ecosystem. We will not tolerate shark fin trafficking in New York State."

Shark fins are tempting targets for fishermen because they have high monetary and cultural value. The fins are used in a popular dish called shark fin soup. One way the fins are obtained is by the practice of shark finning, which is the process of slicing off a shark's fin and returning the shark to open waters. A finned shark, unable to swim or pass water across its gills, dies from suffocation or blood loss. An estimated 73 million sharks are killed each year to supply the growing global demand for their fins.

In October of 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) alerted DEC to a large shipment of dried shark fins headed from JFK Airport to a business in Brooklyn. Working together, the USFWS and DEC police determined that the shipment included several protected species of shark fins such as hammerhead, grey sharpnose, broadfin and blacktip reef sharks. The shipment originated in Hong Kong while the company claimed fins originated from South Africa. However, some of the shark species identified are not present in South African water.

DEC police and USFWS agents tracked the shipment to Long Quan Seafood Corp. which accepted the shipment. At that time, the enforcement team acting on a warrant secured with the assistance of the Kings County District Attorney's Office, responded and confiscated the illegal product. Law Enforcement personnel also searched the company's business records and secured documents related to the illegal shark fin trafficking.

To report an environmental crime, individuals can call DEC's 24 hour hotline at 1-844-DEC-ECOs (1-844-332-3267).

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