

6 Chinese fishing trawlers fined for entering SA waters

Six Chinese fishing trawlers were detained and issued with fines in April, the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries announced late last week, after they had entered South African waters without the required permission.



Image source: www.pixabay.com

The trawlers were detected entering the South African Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off the Northern Cape coast on 3 April 2020, after being ordered out of Namibian waters by the Namibian authorities. Fishery patrol vessel, the Sarah Baartman, later intercepted the vessels off the Western Cape coast and ordered them to the outer anchorage of the Port of Cape Town. Following the interception of the vessels on 7 April, the Chinese Embassy submitted a Diplomatic Note requesting permission for the vessels to shelter in Cape Town from adverse weather conditions.

Released and monitored

The vessels were then boarded by an integrated Operation Phakisa Initiative 5 team and inspected. No fish were found aboard and all fishing gear was stored as per the Marine Living Resources Act. All the vessels were subsequently fined for entering South African waters without permission.

Once the fines had been paid, the six trawlers were released and monitored as they transited South African waters.

Whilst off Port Elizabeth, the vessels requested permission to shelter in Algoa Bay from adverse weather conditions. The request was approved by the South African Maritime Safety Authority. After departing Algoa Bay, the vessels sailed up the coast and left South African waters late on 19 April and early on the morning of 20 April 2020.

According to the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, there was no evidence of illegal activity whilst in South African waters.

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