

## Taste for Illegal Caviar Leads to \$20,750 in Fines

**NEWS**

April 10, 2014

Two Richmond Hill men received a total of \$20,750 in fines and probation orders for illegally possessing lake sturgeon eggs and meat.

Denis Zehovoy and Ilia Kazatchkov pleaded guilty to illegally possessing lake sturgeon eggs and meat. They were each fined \$10,000 and are prohibited for the next five years from being within three metres of the Mississagi River in the Town of Blind River. Zehovoy also pleaded guilty to making a false statement to a conservation officer and was fined \$750.

The court heard that on September 22, 2013, Blind River District conservation officers stopped three anglers in a vehicle as they were travelling back to Toronto. Zehovoy claimed they were transporting only salmon. Upon inspecting the vehicle, conservation officers located a box containing 27 pounds of sturgeon eggs and four pounds of sturgeon meat.

Further investigation revealed that Zehovoy and Kazatchkov had been fishing in Blind River the previous weekend. They stayed with a Blind River resident and expressed an interest in getting sturgeon eggs, knowing it was illegal to possess them. Zehovoy and Kazatchkov arranged to meet the individual on September 22, at which time they received the eggs and meat.

Justice of the Peace Darlene Hayden heard the case in the Ontario Court of Justice, Blind River, on March 26, 2014.

The lake sturgeon population in the Great Lakes-Upper St. Lawrence River is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. It is illegal to possess plants or animals listed as threatened under the act.

To report a natural resource violation, call 1-877-TIPS-MNR (847-7667) toll-free any time or contact your ministry office during regular business hours. You can also call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).