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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Police Find Half a Ton of Caviar in Speeding Hearse (Video)

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Police are looking into the source of the caviar and considering charges for illegal production and distribution.

Police in Russia's Far East stopped a hearse speeding on a highway — only to find half a ton of caviar stashed inside.

The Interior Ministry's department in the Khabarovsk region said on Tuesday the hearse was caught speeding on the road connecting Khabarovsk, not far from the Chinese border, to a city further north. When police officers asked the driver to open the car they saw plastic containers with caviar hidden under the wreaths lying next to a casket. More caviar was found inside the casket, which did not contain a body.

The driver and his partner, who both work for a funeral director, told the police they had been hired by a man in a village outside Khabarovsk who asked them to take the casket with the body of a female relative to a city morgue. The men insisted that they had no idea what was inside the casket.

Police are looking into the source of the caviar and considering charges for illegal production and distribution.

Caviar production in Russia is strictly regulated and contained to about 50 sturgeon farms. Wild caviar production and sturgeon fishing is almost entirely banned, except for indigenous peoples of Russia's north who have to obtain permits. Sturgeon populations in the Caspian Sea have shrunk dramatically since the fall of the Soviet Union because of illegal fishing.

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