

Two tons of pot seized at beach

Five men caught bringing it ashore

By LANE WALLACE
STAFF WRITER

Sheriff's deputies seized more than two tons of marijuana and arrested five men in Davenport this morning in the largest marijuana raid in Santa Cruz County history.

Sheriff's Sgt. Denny Clare said an anonymous caller tipped deputies at 3 a.m. that a boat was in the water off Coast Road without its running lights and that there were people on the beach. The beach is off a private road.

While a Coast Guard helicop-

ter looked for the boat, deputies on land found the five men. "They were fleeing," Clare said. One man tried to drive away, but was caught after a chase by a patrol deputy. Four other vehicles were found parked nearby, some loaded with marijuana.

Clare said it appeared to be a sophisticated smuggling operation, with surfboards and a motorized raft. Deputies haven't located the main boat, which was gone by the time the Coast Guard helicopter arrived.

Clare said the marijuana "was well packaged" in large

boxes and appears to be of high quality. The packaging, which included a golden dragon symbol, indicates the pot may have come from the Orient, Clare said.

Some of the marijuana was hidden near the beach under camouflage netting, said Clare. More than 20 deputies participated in the raid and subsequent investigation.

Names and addresses of the arrested men were not immediately available. All appeared to be in their 20s or 30s, Clare said.