

Expo shows illegal pet trade rampant in Indonesia

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Indonesian man look at parrot statues during a flora and fauna exhibition in Jakarta, Indonesia, Thursday, July 29, 2010. (AP Photo/Dita Alangkara)

(AP) -- The most threatened tortoise in the world is being sold openly at a plant and animal exposition in the heart of Indonesia's capital, highlighting concerns about the rampant - and growing - illegal pet trade.

The country has become a major trading hub for endangered tortoises and freshwater turtles, including species from Africa, South America and Asia, said Chris Shepherd of TRAFFIC, a British-based international wildlife monitoring network

He said the government has failed to follow up on repeated promises to crackdown.

Those found Friday at Jakarta's annual [flora](#) and fauna expo - held from July 2 until Aug. 2 - included the world's most threatened ploughshare tortoise and the critically endangered radiated tortoises, both from Madagascar and fetching around \$150.

Cages also were filled with rare Indian star tortoises, which are protected under the Convention on [International Trade](#) on [Endangered Species](#), known as CITES, and the endangered pig-nose [tortoise](#), from Indonesia's easternmost province of Papua, both selling for \$1,500.

Vendors told The Associated Press other threatened tortoises and turtles not found on display could easily be obtained for a price.

"Recent surveys, and this expo, have shown that the trade continues and, in fact, now involves more illegally imported species than ever," said Shepherd. "Dealers know full well that it is illegal and are taking advantage of the enforcement agencies lack of action."

Indonesia, one of the most biologically diverse nations in the world, has for years sold everything from eagles and leopard cats to gibbons as pets in the capital, though often less openly. Shady transactions continue to take place in the back alleys of the popular Pramuka Market.

More information: TRAFFIC: <http://www.traffic.org/reptiles-amphibians/>

Ploughshare Tortoise:

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/9016/0>

Radiated Tortoise: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/9014/0>

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