

Philippine police seize 2,000 geckos from trader

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This photo received from TRAFFIC Southeast Asia on November 16 shows an orange-spotted Tokay Gecko in Malaysia. Philippine authorities seized a haul of about 2,000 live geckos as part of a campaign to protect the lizard that is highly-valued in traditional Asian medicine, police said Wednesday.

Philippine authorities seized a haul of about 2,000 live geckos as part of a campaign to protect the lizard that is highly-valued in traditional Asian medicine, police said Wednesday.

Police and environment department officers seized the [lizards](#), held in boxes, crates and cages, from a trading company in the southern port city of General Santos on Tuesday just before they were due to be shipped to Manila.

The head of the trading company said the [geckos](#) were going to be used

as part of an [organic farming](#) project but police investigator Senior Superintendent Bert Ferro said they violated wildlife protection laws by acquiring them.

"At least 14 people, including (the owner) were arrested during the raid," Ferro added.

Regional wildlife protection chief, Zosimo Soriano said the animals would eventually be released into the wild.

Demand for geckos from the Philippines has intensified in recent months as the Asia-wide [alternative medicine](#) trade ravaged the lizard's numbers in neighbouring Malaysia, the government warned in July.

Trapping, selling or exporting geckos, regarded by some Asians as cure-alls, is punishable by hefty fines and jail terms of up to four years.

Twenty-six gecko species are found only in the Philippines, which also has eight other varieties that are also found elsewhere, the department said.

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