

Philippines seizes butchered pangolins

January 6 2012



An environment officer checks pangolin meat after it was seized at the Palawan airport. Philippine wildlife authorities seized a huge shipment of meat and scales from up to a hundred slaughtered pangolins, also known as scaly anteaters, officials said on Friday.

Philippine wildlife authorities seized a huge shipment of meat and scales from up to a hundred slaughtered pangolins, also known as scaly anteaters, officials said on Friday.

Their meat and scales were probably destined for China to be used in culinary delicacies, [traditional medicine](#) and handicrafts, the officials said.

No one was arrested in the seizure operations this week at Puerto Princesa airport on the island of Palawan, the only area where they can be found in the Philippines, said local conservation official Alex Marciada.

"We suspect, considering the volume of the scales, that between 80 to 100 individual ([pangolins](#)) were butchered," Marciada, spokesman of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, told AFP.

The pangolin, which eats termites and ants, is a protected animal in the Philippines where it is considered "near-threatened" by the International Union for the [Conservation of Nature](#) due to extensive hunting and habitat loss.

Palawan authorities seized 26.5 kilograms (58 pounds) of pangolin meat on Wednesday and 95 kilograms of pangolin scales on Monday at Puerto Princesa airport, Marciada said.

Also seized with the pangolin scales were 90.5 kilograms of scales from endangered [sea turtles](#), he said, describing the seizures as the biggest haul of trafficked pangolin meat in Palawan.

Wildlife officers said the shipment was disguised as frozen goat meat.

The government is hunting for those behind the killing of the pangolins which is punishable by up to six years in jail for every animal killed, said wildlife enforcement officer Adelina Villena.

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Citation: Philippines seizes butchered pangolins (2012, January 6) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-01-philippines-seizes-butchered-pangolins.html>

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