

Pakistan customs bag record haul of illegal turtle meat

March 6 2015



File photo taken on September 11, 2014 shows spotted pond turtles in a pool at a quarantine centre in the southern Pakistani city of Sukkur

Pakistani authorities are investigating after nearly two tonnes of freshwater turtle meat—a record haul taken from more than 4,000

animals—was seized from smugglers at Karachi port, officials said Friday.

Customs officers last week foiled an attempt to smuggle 1.9 tonnes of turtle meat falsely labelled as fish meat to Hong Kong.

Hunting turtles to smuggle to clients in China and Thailand has become a major threat to the protected black spotted variety, which lives in the Indus river, in recent years.

"This is the biggest ever consignment of turtles seized in the history of the (Pakistani) customs," senior [customs](#) official Irfan Javed told AFP.

He said the shipment of dried meat and other body parts harvested from 4,200 turtles was worth more than \$6 million on the international market.

The consignment was confiscated last week after an official on duty ordered a search of a suspicious container at the port.

A Pakistani firm registered in the city's upmarket Defence area had arranged the consignment for a Chinese importer in Hong Kong.

A case under the criminal and wildlife laws has been registered and efforts to make arrests were under way, Javed said.

Customs officials are working closely with the World Wildlife Fund on the case.

Samples have been sent for further tests to ascertain the exact species of the turtles before they were sealed at the Customs confiscation facility.

Around 200 of the black spotted turtles, which are listed as vulnerable on

the IUCN "red list" of endangered species, were smuggled from Pakistan to Taxkorgan in China's Xinjiang autonomous region in June last year.

Officials were able to retrieve those [turtles](#) and return them to their home in the Indus.

© 2015 AFP

Citation: Pakistan customs bag record haul of illegal turtle meat (2015, March 6) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-03-pakistan-customs-bag-haul-illegal.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.