

Indonesian police seize tiger skin, deer genitals

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Indonesian wildlife officials display seized animal parts, including a tiger skin, deer genitalia and pangolin scales, in Medan on October 17, 2016

Three Indonesian men have been arrested for allegedly trading in protected species, with police seizing animal parts including a tiger skin, deer genitalia and pangolin scales, an official said Monday.

The suspects were caught over the weekend after an undercover police

operation at a hotel in the city of Medan on Sumatra island, which is close to national parks that are home to a panoply of exotic animals.

Police posing as buyers met one of the men, who agreed to sell a tiger skin for 70 million rupiah (\$5,350) before he was arrested.

Authorities later found three kilograms (6.6 pounds) of scales from critically endangered pangolins in his car, which he said he planned to sell for 36 million rupiah to two friends.

Pangolins, known as "scaly anteaters", are the world's most heavily trafficked mammal and a global wildlife conference last month voted to ban all trade in the creatures.

The two friends were then caught, and were found to be in possession of genitalia from protected deers, snake skins, and turtle shells, police said.

The men are accused of breaking laws on possessing and trading in protected animals.

"They face up to five years in jail and a fine of up to 100 million rupiah," Toga Habinsaran Panjaitan, from the local police special crimes unit, told reporters.



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Indonesia, the world's biggest archipelago of over 17,000 islands, is one of the world's most biodiverse nations and its vast expanses of jungle are home to numerous endangered animals.

But many are under threat as poachers increasingly target them for their body parts, which are regarded as edible delicacies and used in traditional Chinese medicine.

Their habitats are also being obliterated by rapid expansion of palm oil and pulpwood plantations.

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