

Endangered Galapagos tortoises saved from suspected traffickers

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Peruvian officials found 29 Galapagos tortoises, considered vulnerable to extinction, on a bus while working to identify a wildlife trafficking ring

Nearly three dozen Galapagos tortoises considered vulnerable to extinction will return to Ecuador after being rescued in Peru from alleged traffickers, the Galapagos National Park said.

Peruvian wildlife authorities found 29 small tortoises—two of them

dead—in a cardboard box on a bus on its way from northern Peru to Lima.

Officials made the discovery while working to identify a suspected international wildlife trafficking ring, which has a route from Peru to the European black market.

The driver and transportation company are under investigation.

As the tortoises are small, Galapagos park officials said genetic studies will be necessary to determine the zone of the archipelago they were taken from.

Eleven species of [giant tortoises](#) call the Galapagos Islands home.

The Pacific island chain off the coast of Ecuador is famous for its unique flora and fauna studied by Charles Darwin as he developed his theory of evolution.

Lonesome George, the last known member of the subspecies *Geochelone nigra abingdoni*, died in 2012.

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