

Malaysia seizes 300kg of pangolin scales

June 13 2017



A Malaysian customs official poses with seized pangolin scales on May 8, 2017

Malaysian customs officers have seized almost 300 kilograms of pangolin scales being smuggled through the main airport, officials said on Tuesday.

The 288-kilogram (635 pound) haul was found at Kuala Lumpur International Airport last Friday in 12 boxes labelled as [oyster shells](#) on the waybill.

The scales worth around 3.69 million ringgit (\$870,000) arrived from Ghana on a Turkish Airlines flight, the customs department said in a statement.

Authorities are investigating.

The scales of the endangered [pangolin](#), the world's most heavily trafficked mammal, are highly prized in Vietnam and China where they are misleadingly touted as having medicinal properties.

Malaysia last month made its largest haul of such scales, 712 kilograms estimated to be worth more than nine million ringgit.

Pangolins are indigenous to the jungles of Indonesia, parts of Malaysia and areas of southern Thailand, and their meat is considered a delicacy in China.

Four pangolin species can also be found in Africa. Increasingly they are smuggled to Southeast Asia from Africa, but the majority go to China.

Soaring demand has seen an estimated one million pangolins plucked from Asian and African forests over the past decade.

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