

\$1.2 million of pangolin scales seized in Malaysia

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A \$1.2 million illegal shipment of scales from the critically endangered pangolin have been uncovered in Malaysia, officials said Friday, the second such seizure in a week.

Customs officials at Kuala Lumpur International Airport discovered 16

boxes of the smuggled scales weighing almost 400 kilogrammes (880 pounds).

Last Friday, customs officers seized almost 300 kilograms of scales from the creatures, which are also known as "scaly anteaters".

Both shipments had come from Ghana and been transported by Turkish Airlines.

Pangolins—docile mammals with a thick armour—are indigenous to parts of Southeast Asia and Africa.

Their meat is considered a delicacy in China and their scales are sometimes used in the production of crystal methamphetamine.

Soaring demand for the reclusive creature has seen an estimated one million pangolins plucked from Asian and African forests over the past decade, sending their numbers to perilous lows.

Elizabeth John, senior communications officer of the Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network (Traffic), hailed the rapid success of the customs department in making two such busts within a week.

"But there is also a need for intelligence-led cross border investigations to nab the big players who are driving the trade," she told AFP.

Authorities in neighbouring Indonesia on Wednesday seized hundreds of live pangolins and scales in a haul worth \$190,000.

Malaysia last month made its largest haul of such scales, 712 kilograms estimated to be worth more than \$2 million.

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