

Indonesia smugglers stuffed exotic birds in pipes: police

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There is large-scale illegal trading of birds in Indonesia, which sees them sold in giant avian markets in the country's major cities, or smuggled abroad

Smugglers who allegedly stuffed 125 exotic birds into drain pipes have been arrested in Indonesia, officials said Thursday, as part of a bid to clamp down on a lucrative illegal trade in wildlife.

Four men have been charged after 41 endangered white cockatoos and

84 [eclectus parrots](#) were discovered squashed into plastic piping that had been cut and sealed at each end by wire.

Police said the men were arrested in four separate locations in eastern Indonesia, and are part of a suspected [wildlife](#) trafficking ring.

They face a maximum five years in prison and 100 million Rupiah (\$7,400) fine if found guilty.

The vast jungles of Indonesia are home to 131 threatened bird species, according to wildlife trade watchdog TRAFFIC, more than any other country except Brazil.

But there is also large-scale illegal trading of birds, which sees them sold in giant avian markets in Indonesia's major cities, or smuggled abroad.

Exotic birds are usually poached and trafficked by smuggling gangs for sale as pets and as status symbols.

The Philippines may have been the destination for the [birds](#) found on Monday because the suspects are linked to "a parrot smuggling network there", said Dwi Adhiasto of the Wildlife Conservation Society, which works with Indonesian authorities to halt such crime.



Exotic birds, like the eclectus parrots seen here, are usually poached and trafficked by smuggling gangs for sale as pets and as status symbols

White cockatoos, which are native to the remote North Maluku province, are classified as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Their global population is estimated to be between 43,000 and 183,000, IUCN says, but is in decline because of poaching, trafficking and habitat loss.

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