

Philippines seizes hundreds of smuggled animals

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Authorities seized on Tuesday hundreds of exotic pets smuggled into the Philippines, which is a regional hub in the illicit animal trade.

The cache of some 300 creatures, which included squirrel-like sugar gliders, wallabies and a threatened species of [cockatoo](#), was one of the

nation's largest wildlife busts.

"In terms of live animals, this was likely one of our biggest (captures)," government environment official Rogelio Demelletes told AFP.

Four suspects were arrested in the raid that turned up animals native to Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

The haul also included seven red birds of paradise and 26 Moluccan cockatoos, which wildlife monitor IUCN considers to be at high risk of extinction in the wild.

Philippine officials put the market value of the confiscated creatures at \$192,000, which is more than all the live wildlife seized by Manila last year.

As the global convention on wildlife trade lists the Moluccan cockatoo as a species threatened with extinction, the suspects face up to 12 years in prison if convicted under the country's wildlife act.

Despite the law, the Philippines has a burgeoning illegal trade in [wildlife](#), increasingly transacted on [social media platforms](#).



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The Philippines is a regional hub in the illicit animal trade

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