

Malaysia finds hornbill 'ivory' in massive wildlife seizure

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Hornbill 'ivory' is becoming increasingly popular in China, where it is made into ornaments and jewellery

Almost 800 animal parts including a huge stash of hornbill "ivory", pangolin scales and deer's antlers, have been seized in a raid on Borneo island, officials in Malaysia said on Thursday.

Borneo's vast jungles are home to a kaleidoscope of rare creatures but they are frequently targeted by poachers who sell their parts to collectors and for use in [traditional medicine](#), particularly in China.

The island is shared between Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei.

Officials uncovered the huge haul on Saturday in a raid on a house in Kapit in Malaysia's Sarawak state, and a 56-year-old man was arrested, senior forestry official Zolkipli Mohamad Aton told AFP

It included 148 helmet-like blocks of reddish keratin that is found on the front of the skulls of colourful hornbill birds.

Although it is different to ivory from elephant tusks, the material is commonly known as hornbill "ivory" and is in growing demand in China, where it is carved into luxury ornaments, statues and jewellery.

The rest of the stash included hornbill feathers, scales from pangolins—known as "scaly anteaters"—peacock feathers, porcupine quills, and deer antlers, Zolkipli said, adding it was the biggest such seizure in Sarawak for 16 years.

He said the suspect could be a supplier of animal parts to syndicates exporting them to markets such as China, Hong Kong and Vietnam, and was facing jail for breaking wildlife protection laws.

Elizabeth John, a spokeswoman for the wildlife trade watchdog Traffic, said the hornbill ivory seizure was "very significant" given the rise in poaching.

"Seizure data shows China to be a major destination for hornbill ivory and it is seen as a substitute for elephant [ivory](#)," she told AFP.

Malaysia's proximity to major markets and its well-developed port network have made the country a regional hub for wildlife smuggling.

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