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CROSSING THE RED LINE

JAPAN'S EXOTIC PET TRADE

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TRAFFIC REPORT

CROSSING THE RED LINE

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LCES	Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
FEFTA	Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Act
AWMA	Act on Welfare and Management of Animals
METI	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
MLIT	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism
MOE	Ministry of Environment
MHLW	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
JPY	Yen
USD	United States Dollar
AUD	Australian Dollar
ZAR	South African Rand

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OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

JAPAN CUSTOMS INBOUND SEIZURES

78

incoming seizures involving
1,161 specimens of CITES-
listed species between
2007–2018



13

COUNTRIES/
TERRITORIES

identified as the
immediate points
of origin: Thailand,
mainland China,
Indonesia and Hong Kong
SAR as key exporters

The estimated market value of specimens seized between 2014–2018 reached **JPY54.1–125.6 million** (USD492,000–1.1 million)

TAXA AND MODE OF TRANSPORT



71%

of all specimens observed were
REPTILES



19%

of all specimens observed were
MAMMALS



6%

of all specimens observed were
BIRDS

65%

of incidents concerned
passenger airlines



185 + 10
PRIMATES **BATS**

banned for import under the
Infectious Disease Control Law

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JUDICIAL OUTCOMES IN JAPAN



18+

defendants in
12 cases since
2007 in Japan
prosecuted

AT LEAST 4 DEFENDANTS

identified with other wildlife crime offences
either in Japan or overseas

ONLY THREE SENTENCED

without a suspension of the sentence for
imprisonment

Maximum prison sentence of up to
one year and 10 months
in combination with a fine of up to

JPY800,000

OVERSEAS SEIZURES AND ILLEGAL EXPORT FROM JAPAN

At least 28 incidents
involving 1,207
specimens bound for
Japan were seized since
2007 – including at least

500

SPECIMENS OF NON-CITES SPECIES

At least four Japanese smugglers arrested multiple times in multiple countries

A total of **461**

Japanese endemic
reptiles and amphibians
were seized in 3 cases
since 2015



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Japan has historically been identified as one of the biggest consumer countries of exotic pets (Auliya *et al.*, 2016), where hundreds of threatened species are in demand (Wakao *et al.*, 2018), including slow lorises, owls and pythons privately kept by individuals. Demand in Japan has been a persistent driving force within the global context of the exotic pet trade, with illegal activity illuminated by seizures and suspected laundering of various reptiles or otters described in recent studies (Gomez and Bouhuys, 2018; Wakao *et al.*, 2018; Kitade and Naruse, 2018; Nijman and Stoner, 2014; Wakao, 2018).

While these research studies have raised the alarm through taxon-specific research, no comprehensive review of seizures or assessment of law enforcement effectiveness have been conducted to date, leaving no clear path toward addressing the problem despite many concerned voices being raised. The present study aims pointedly to fill in these gaps.

A comprehensive dataset of inbound seizures of species listed in the Convention on International Trade

in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) recorded by Japan Customs for the period 2007–2018 was compiled and analysed as critical background for the overall research. To grasp the scale and trend of recent seizures, the monetary value was estimated for seizures recorded during 2014–2018 using the legal market price in Japan as virtually all species in seizure records can be sold legally in the domestic market. Further information regarding trafficking incidents discovered within Japan's borders by police investigations was also sought through reviews of Japanese media reports.

The identified incidents were then examined through the chain of law enforcement actions, from seizures to any successful convictions, using publicly available information. The study also reviewed overseas reports of incidents implicating Japan as the probable destination as well as Japanese nationals involved in exotic pet smuggling incidents outside Japan. Last but not least, incidents of outbound seizures were checked in media reports to grasp Japan's emerging role as a hotspot of exotic pet trafficking.

The report relies on seizure data and somewhat incomplete information on law enforcement and judicial outcomes. Taking into account limitations in the data, the research revealed the following key findings.

JAPAN CUSTOMS INBOUND SEIZURE DATA

78 INCOMING SEIZURES

involving **1,161 specimens of CITES-listed species** used as exotic pets were reported by Japan Customs between 2007–2018, with no more than 10 seizures made annually since 2008. This level of seizures for a major consumer country like Japan likely translates to a low detection rate.

SMALL-SCALE SEIZURES

involving no more than five specimens comprised a majority (54%). However, each seizure still carried significant financial value with an **average estimated retail value of JPY1.5–3.6 million (USD14,000–33,000)**.

THE ESTIMATED MARKET VALUE

of specimens seized between 2014–2018 reached **JPY54.1–125.6 million (USD492,000–1.1 million)**. This figure likely represents a small portion of criminal proceeds generated by smuggling exotic pets into Japan.

CITES APPENDIX II-LISTED SPECIES

comprised 91% of seized specimens. Reptiles accounted for 71%, followed by 19% mammals and 6% birds. Mammalian seizures included primates and bats whose import is prohibited by the Infectious Disease Control Law. Seizures of other taxa (i.e. arachnids, insects, amphibians and fishes) were rare.

THIRTEEN COUNTRIES/TERRITORIES

were identified as direct exporters, **with the Southeast Asia region accounting for 55% of the points of origin for seizure incidents** followed by East Asia with 36%. Thailand and mainland China, followed by Indonesia and Hong Kong SAR, were by far the most prominent exporters to Japan.

MODE OF TRANSPORT

used most frequently was passenger airlines 65%, followed by international mail 24%, commercial air cargo 8%, and cruise ship 3%. In terms of locations, seizures were concentrated in key international airports and postal centres in large urban areas (i.e. the Greater Tokyo Area and Osaka). The only seizure associated with maritime transport was via a cruise ship reported in Okinawa.

REVIEW OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JUDICIAL OUTCOMES

CUSTOMS

pressed criminal charges against suspects in at least **eight smuggling incidents out of 25 that underwent investigations between 2012–2018**. While limited in numbers, this reflects increased recognition of the gravity of trafficking of live animals by the Japan's authorities since the Customs Act prescribes violations that are not considered liable to imprisonment to be dealt with administrative disposition (fines) instead of criminal charges.

PROSECUTIONS

totalled at least 18 defendants in 12 cases of exotic pet smuggling incidents that occurred since 2007 in Japan were found to have been prosecuted, of which eight cases were for incidents since 2017. Eight cases (12 suspects) resulted from Customs seizures, while the other four cases (six suspects) were from police investigations mostly looking into laundering of smuggled specimens in the domestic market. Most charges involved violation of the Customs Act.

THE DEFENDANTS

were all Japanese citizens and largely restricted to actual smugglers/sellers, with at least four being (having been) owners of pet shops in Japan. At least four defendants were identified with other wildlife crime offences either in Japan or overseas, indicating insufficient deterrent provided by current criminal justice responses.

CONVICTIONS

was found to be high with **14 defendants from 10 cases with known outcomes all convicted**. However, only three were sentenced without a suspension of the sentence for imprisonment—up to one year and 10 months in combination with a fine of up to JPY800,000 (USD7,280). Eight defendants were fined an average of JPY478,000 (USD4,348).

SEIZURE INCIDENTS REPORTED OVERSEAS IMPLICATING JAPAN AS THE DESTINATION

MEDIA REPORTS OF SEIZURES OVERSEAS

identified at least **28 incidents involving 1,207 specimens**, revealing the extent of smuggling by Japanese nationals in locations not implicated by Japan Customs' seizures (e.g. Australia, South Africa, Argentina, and Venezuela) and involvement of at least 500 non-CITES listed species (e.g. Australian endemic reptiles, South American beetles).

REPEATED ARRESTS

of at least **four Japanese smugglers in multiple countries revealed some level of criminal professionalisation**, while recent arrests of young Japanese citizens pointed to the operation of organised criminal networks recruiting young people as mules for transnational trafficking.

ILLEGAL EXPORT FROM JAPAN

SEIZURE REPORTS

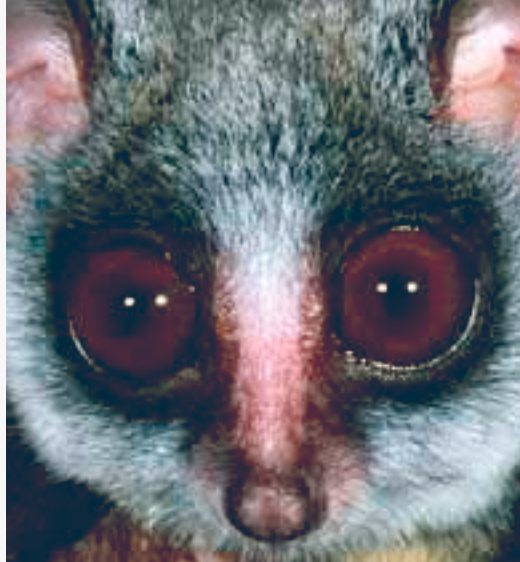
in the media regarding illegal export of exotic pets from Japan were sparse with only eight incidents identified. However, **at least three reported cases since 2015 concerned a total of up to 461 exploitations of Japanese endemic reptiles and amphibians**.

In summary, seizure data help characterise Japan's active role in global exotic pet trafficking networks, especially as a destination country, receiving shipments mainly from, but not limited to, countries in the Asian region. The geographical extent combined with the diversity of trade involving not only CITES-listed species but also trade in non-listed species that are protected in range countries, including Japanese endemics, highlights the complexity of the problem which requires responses at regional and international levels. The results also reveal how the prevalent lack of awareness and resources is an impediment to providing sufficient deterrent penalties through the chain of law enforcement actions in Japan, starting with the low rate of detection at the border to a general trend of weak sentencing.

To overcome this, a national level commitment is required to strengthen capacity through improved international/interagency co-operation with civil society support. Finally, the seizure data collected in this study represent only a fraction of actual smuggling into Japan's domestic exotic pet market, for which the current legal framework allows the laundering of smuggled specimens into legal trade once they evade Customs control at the border. A legal review and voluntary measures in the relevant sectors are therefore also recommended to address the issue of laundering. On the basis of findings from research and analysis covered in this report, TRAFFIC makes a number of recommendations detailed in the following pages.



RECOMMENDATIONS



1

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR:

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT CO-OPERATION

Law enforcement agencies in Japan and other jurisdictions affected by transnational exotic pet trafficking, particularly those in Asia are strongly advised to:

- ✓ **Strengthen international enforcement co-operation** to combat exotic pet trafficking by developing new or building on existing bilateral or multilateral frameworks.
- ✓ Consider **developing a tool in Asia similar to the Trade in Wildlife Information eXchanges (TWIXs)** developed in the EU and African regions to facilitate information exchange and co-operation.

2

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR:

NATIONAL-LEVEL LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Japanese government is strongly advised to:

- ✓ **Develop interagency enforcement co-operation** through reviews, capacity assessment, dialogues, joint trainings, and establish a taskforce to design and implement a national action plan for combatting wildlife crime, including exotic pet trafficking.
- ✓ **Mobilise civil society** including experts, NGOs, and relevant business sectors (e.g. transport, finance, online as well as wildlife-related companies) through formal collaboration to support law enforcement agencies' efforts in detection, species identification, investigation, and prosecution of wildlife trafficking cases.
- ✓ Based on capacity assessment, **allocate sufficient human and financial resources** to enforcement agencies to provide greater capacity for criminal justice responses to wildlife trafficking both at the national level and through international co-operation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR:

NATIONAL-LEVEL LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Japanese law enforcement agencies (Customs and Police) are strongly advised to:

- ✓ **Conduct further staff training to raise their awareness** and ability to detect and investigate wildlife trafficking, including dialogues and joint training between agencies to enhance the level of co-operation;
- ✓ **Conduct a Customs capacity assessment** with an emphasis on high-risk locations as well as transportation methods where capacity is currently deemed low and tactically employing new resources and detection techniques;
- ✓ Establish measures to **tackle trafficking via the international mail** where a loophole in the Customs Act hinders criminal justice responses (e.g. by applying other legislations);
- ✓ Increase efforts to **clamp down on criminal networks involved in trafficking of exotic pets** and other wildlife by maximising the use of approaches such as profiling and intelligence-led surveillance, financial investigation and, if applicable, bringing charges for seizure of criminal assets;
- ✓ **Make information on all criminal charges resulting from violation of CITES regulations available** to the public to allow tracking of trafficking trends and court outcomes.

The Japanese Judiciary sector is strongly advised to:

- ✓ **Consider suitable methods (e.g. through formal training)** to sensitise prosecutors, judges, and citizen judges (in Japan this is similar to a jury) to the significance and impact of wildlife trafficking;
- ✓ **Make information on concluded criminal court cases easily accessible** to the public as granted by the law, to facilitate assessments of judicial responses to wildlife criminal cases and to increase deterrents to illegal behaviour by publicising law enforcement actions.

3

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR:

CITES AND NATIONAL LEGISLATION

The Japanese government and law makers are strongly advised to:

- ✓ Review the current legal framework, including the level of penalties, of CITES-implementing and other legislation relevant to wildlife trafficking and consider possible measures to **increase the level of deterrent**;

- ✓ Review the current legal framework of domestic market regulations, including Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (LCES) and Act on Welfare and Management of Animals (AWMA), and consider effective measures to **prevent laundering of illegally obtained specimens into the domestic market**;
- ✓ Review and strengthen the current regulations for the control of import/export as well as domestic sales of live animals in order to **mitigate the risk of transmission of zoonotic diseases**;
- ✓ **Urgently provide sufficient legal protection to endangered native species** that are impacted by exotic pet trafficking through listings in CITES, LCES and local ordinances as appropriate.

The governments of range states of nationally protected species affected by exotic pet trafficking should;

- ✓ **Consider urgently listing affected species in CITES Appendix III** to enable law enforcement actions at the borders of importing countries such as Japan.

4

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: CIVIL SOCIETY

International and Japanese NGOs should:

- ✓ **Support effective law enforcement** through: 1) facilitating international/interagency co-operation; 2) providing technical assistance through training, tools, and information sharing; 3) mobilising the public and the private sector; 4) and monitoring and reporting wildlife trafficking;
- ✓ **Conduct court-case monitoring of enforcement and judicial responses** to wildlife criminal cases in order to facilitate the assessment of judicial capacity and the level of deterrent penalties;
- ✓ **Undertake continued trade and market monitoring** to keep abreast of emerging trade patterns and novel segments of demand for pets, including lesser known taxa, locations, routes, and methods that are possibly underrepresented in known seizure reports.

The Japanese exotic pet industry and relevant stakeholders (including veterinary practitioners as well as companies dealing in exotic pet products and insurance) should:

- ✓ **Introduce zero tolerance policy against smuggling** through: 1) establishing mechanisms for ensuring traceability and legal origin of animals for sale; and 2) restricting access to markets and services by offenders and businesses who have committed wildlife crime;
- ✓ **Actively report suspicious activities to law enforcement agencies** in order to support effective investigations.



The transport (airline, maritime, and logistics companies) sector is strongly advised to:

- ✓ **Introduce wildlife trafficking counter measures into company and industry policies**, guidance and best practices, including methods for confidential reporting and collaboration with local law enforcement;
- ✓ **Conduct awareness-raising and role-specific training** (e.g. through the ROUTES Partnership*) to equip staff with necessary knowledge and skills to detect and report wildlife trafficking to law enforcement agencies and incorporate a module into existing training programmes;

***About the ROUTES Partnership**

The USAID Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species (ROUTES) Partnership brings together transport and logistics companies, government agencies, development groups, law enforcement, conservation organisations and donors to disrupt wildlife trafficking activities, and forms a key element of the concerted international response to addressing wildlife poaching and associated criminal activities worldwide. Further information and resources can be found at www.routespartnership.org.

THE PROCESS FOR STOPPING EXOTIC PET TRAFFICKING

JAPANESE GOVERNMENT

Develop interagency enforcement co-operation
Mobilise civil society through formal co-operation
Allocate sufficient human and financial resources

JAPANESE LAW MAKERS

Review CITES implementation legislations
Review domestic trade regulations
Review infectious disease prevention legislations
Legally protect endangered native species

To intervene on illegal activity
To raise the effect of deterrence

JUDICIARY SECTOR

Consider sensitisation of personnel
Make information accessible to the public

To maximise efficiency
To show zero tolerance

EXOTIC PET INDUSTRIES

Introduce private sector policy against smuggling
Report suspicious cases

To close loopholes
To minimise chance of trafficking

COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY TRAFFICKING

Strengthen international enforcement co-operation
Develop tool for cross-border information sharing
List nationally protected species in CITES Appendix III

CUSTOMS AND POLICE

Awareness raising and training of staff
Capacity assessment and enhancement
Enhance co-operation
Proactive investigation

TRANSPORT SECTOR

Awareness raising and training
Enhance the level of vigilance and surveillance, and reporting to law enforcement

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL NGOs

Support law enforcement
Conduct court monitoring
Undertake market monitoring



BACKGROUND AND **OBJECTIVES**

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The keeping of “exotic pets”—often characterised as the owning of rare, non-traditional or non-native wild animal species such as slow lorises *Nycticebus* spp., Small-clawed Otter *Aonyx cinereus*, or Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus*—has grown considerably in commercial scale in Japan and elsewhere, driven by the demand for rare wildlife species (Actman, 2019a; Warwick *et al.*, 2018). Particularly over the past decade, growing connectivity in the global economy appears to have upped the level of international wildlife trade, both legal and illegal, including species targeted by the exotic pet industry (Bush *et al.*, 2014; Harrington, 2015; UNODC, 2016; Utermohlen and Baine, 2018).

Exotic pet markets not only threaten the survival of many species in the wild (Shepherd *et al.*, 2019) but also disrupt native biodiversity through the introduction of non-native, invasive species in imported countries (Lockwood *et al.*, 2019). There is also a risk of transmitting zoonotic diseases to humans (CDC, 2018), with the recent outbreak of COVID-19 a pertinent reminder of the potential role played by wild animals as natural reservoirs of causative pathogens and vectors for human infection (El Zowalaty and Järhult, 2020).

Historically, exotic pets have received relatively limited comprehensive global policy and law enforcement attention compared with their megafauna counterparts like elephants, rhinos and tiger. This is in part due to the complexity arising from the sheer diversity of species and trade patterns and compounded by widespread information gaps. Recently, however, a critical mass of concern has emerged, including a suite of listing proposals and decisions related to regulating the exotic pet trade adopted by Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at its 18th Conference of the Parties (CoP18) (Calle and By-Nc-Sa, 2019). Similarly on the enforcement front, illegal

trade of exotic pets such as reptiles began to feature as a target of dedicated multi-country/regional enforcement operations (EUROPOL, 2019; INTERPOL, 2019; Stoner, 2018).

Japan, along with the USA, Europe and others, is a long-standing, thriving consumer market for exotic pets, where over 600 species of reptiles alone are observed for sale, and with their popularity growing in recent years (Wakao *et al.*, 2018). In East Asia, domestic exotic pet markets in mainland China and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (hereafter “Hong Kong”) have also been characterised as growing (Gallagher, 2017; Inglis *et al.*, 2018; Maron, 2019; Stoner, 2018). As a consumer market in East Asia, Japan is known for its persistent demand for rare species (Wakao *et al.*, 2018). In recent years, several booms in demand for certain “iconic” species such as slow lorises and otters have been observed, often driven by the media, and more recently by social media (Kitade and Naruse, 2018; Nekaris *et al.*, 2013). Such demand has led to the trafficking of animals from overseas, and as previous studies highlighted, there are only minimal regulations afforded to non-native species (Japan’s Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (LCES) only covers CITES Appendix I listed species) once they are trafficked through the border and sold through the “legal” market, which can be described as a de facto laundering space for smuggled animals (Wakao *et al.*, 2018; Kitade & Naruse 2018). Besides its role as a consumer market, it is worth noting that Japan is a range state for a number of endangered endemic species that have recently been adversely impacted by the international pet trade (Wakao 2018).

While there is a rich literature on taxa or region/country-specific studies around the exotic pet trade (e.g. Altherr *et al.*, 2019; Auliya *et al.*, 2016; Morgan, 2018), the full extent of the global trade, particularly the illegal aspect of trade, remains largely uncharted. The present study zeroed in on Japan’s connection to illegal trade, primarily as the end-destination for trafficking. Drawing from the comprehensive seizure data produced by Japan Customs between 2007 and 2018, this study firstly aims to understand the pattern of trafficking in wildlife used as exotic pets

enter Japan. In addition to providing insight into trade dynamics, the analysis estimates the market value of seized specimens. Secondly, available information was reviewed on law enforcement and any subsequent judicial actions taken in response to cases detected at or within Japan's borders. Finally, to complement the above analyses of inbound seizures to convictions within Japan, incidents reported overseas implicating Japan, as well as outbound seizures were compiled from mainly open source reports.

Although seizure data have their limitations as they represent only the most unsuccessful smuggling attempts, the overall findings of this study present

a unique window into the trafficking of exotic pets in a long-standing consumer country. The findings can inform the Japanese government and policy makers of the seriousness and cost of the illicit trade and encourage more formal needs assessments for effectively tackling exotic pets trafficking. This includes impediments for the law enforcement sector, including the judiciary, in ensuring effective actions along the entire law enforcement chain, from border security to judicial sentencing. Finally, this research unlocks information only available in the Japanese language and therefore brings this dataset to a wider audience.

LEGISLATION

IMPORT/EXPORT OF CITES-LISTED SPECIES

Japan manages the cross-border trade of CITES Appendix listed species with the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Act (FEFTA) and the Customs Act. FEFTA and its subsidiary legislation provide for the formalities of issuing export/import permits as required by CITES and further imposes a strict domestic measure for importing "live animals" listed in Appendix I and II, where prior confirmation of import by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) is obligatory. The actual CITES import/export is enforced through the Customs Act, which gives Customs the authority to seize items not accompanied by CITES permits and conduct investigation of criminal cases when infractions are malicious (i.e. liable to penalty under the Customs Act—import/export without permission or with false declaration). The Customs Act prescribes violations to be dealt by administrative disposition (a fine equivalent to applicable penalties for violation of the Customs Act) when a case was determined not severe enough to be liable to a penalty

of imprisonment.

Applicable maximum penalties under both FEFTA and the Customs Act were raised on 1st October 2017 and 10th April 2018, respectively, to cover imprisonment of not more than five years and/or a fine of the higher amount between not more than JPY10 million (USD91,000) or five times the value of goods seized. The Customs Act sets the same maximum penalty for attempted crime. The maximum penalty for orchestration of the crime is three years imprisonment and/or a fine of the higher of JPY5 million (USD45,500) or five times the value of the goods seized, while it is three years imprisonment and/or a fine of the higher of JPY5million (USD45,500) or three times the value of goods seized for "transporting, storing, or obtaining" items associated with a crime, with awareness of the crime being committed.

OTHER LEGISLATIONS RELEVANT TO IMPORT/EXPORT OF LIVE ANIMALS

A suite of legislations related to disease prevention also regulate the importation of certain live animals¹. Besides livestock, poultry and other domesticated animals, animals subject to quarantine include certain non-domesticated mammals, fish and insects, some of which are traded as exotic pets. In particular, the Infectious Disease Control Law bans the import of selected mammals with high risk of transmitting human infectious diseases, including all primates that are imported for commercial purposes². Though applicable only to terrestrial mammals and birds, the law further mandates for any import of live specimens a prior submission of import notification and a sanitary certificate to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW).

Among conservation legislations under the Ministry of the Environment (MOE), the Invasive Alien Species Act and the Protection and Control of Wild Birds and Mammals and Hunting Management Law, respectively, regulate the import of designated non-native species that are determined harmful and wild birds and mammals inhabiting Japan. The Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (LCES) prohibits the export of listed Nationally Endangered Species but does not regulate imports of non-native species in any way.

DOMESTIC LEGISLATION

LCES recognises CITES Appendix I-listed species as Internationally Endangered Species and some of the threatened species native to Japan, including some not protected under CITES, as Nationally Endangered Species. In principle, LCES prohibits the domestic trade of CITES Appendix I-listed species and some native species with the exception of specimens registered with the Ministry of Environment (MOE). Violators can face maximum penalties of five years of imprisonment and/or fines of JPY5million (USD45,500) for individuals and JPY100 million (USD910,000) for businesses. Advertisements for domestic trade are similarly prohibited. Species listed in Appendix II/III are outside the remit of LCES and the law also lacks provision to penalise the possession of specimens obtained in violation of CITES (any Appendices). As for non-native species protected only by national legislations of range states, Japan's legal system collectively offers no protection upon import or within its borders.

The Act on Welfare and Management of Animals (AWMA), designed primarily for livestock and companion animals, regulates businesses handling animals. Though its scope is limited to mammals, birds and reptiles, all businesses dealing with exotic pets from the three taxa are subject to registration. AWMA, however, is devoid of provisions to oversee trade or legal acquisition of animals handled by businesses. AWMA also restricts the keeping of designated animals deemed potentially harmful to human life, body or property, which includes many species kept as exotic pets (e.g. Boa Constrictor *Boa constrictor*).

Finally, LCES and the Act on Protection of Cultural Properties, and ordinances of many local governments protect designated species that are native to Japan from collection, possession and trade including exports.

¹ Act on Domestic Animal Infectious Diseases Control, Rabies Prevention Law, Act on the Prevention of Infectious Diseases and Medical Care for Patients with Infectious Diseases (Infectious Disease Control Law), and Act on the Protection of Fishery Resources, Plants Protection Act

² Chinese ferret-badgers *Melogale moschata*, Bats (order Chiroptera), Raccoon Dogs *Nyctereutes* spp., Masked Musangs *Paguma larvata*, Prairie Dogs *Cynomys* spp., and African soft-furred rats *Praomys* spp., as well as import of primates (except for non-commercial imports from designated countries/territories). Violation can be punished with the maximum fine of JPY500,000 (USD4,550).

A close-up photograph of a tree trunk with peeling bark. An owl is perched on the trunk, its face and upper body visible. The owl has light-colored feathers with dark spots and a white patch on its chest. The bark is dark grey and peeling, revealing a lighter, orange-brown inner layer. The background is a blurred green, suggesting a forest setting.

METHODS

ANALYSIS OF JAPAN CUSTOMS

INBOUND SEIZURES

Japan Customs' official inbound seizure records of CITES-listed species was used as the main data source. The records are collated from Customs branches across Japan and made available annually online. The present study used records of live, and dead animal specimens that were carried along with live specimens, traded as pets in Japan³ for the period between 2007 and 2018. Records which indicated small discrepancies between the actual and authorised quantities or expiration of permits (total of three records) rather than unauthorised imports were excluded from the analysis as the likelihood of using false permits could not be confirmed. Parameters used for the analysis include CITES-listed status, taxonomic category, country/territory of export, mode of transport, and point of detection. It should be noted however that whether the identified exporters played

a role as point-of-origin or transit country/territory, and whether Japan was the final destination was not discernible in the seizure data.

The present study attempted to estimate the monetary value of seizures of the most recent five years (2014–2018), using retail prices in Japan to benchmark the approximate scale of each incident. Albeit trafficked from overseas, species recorded in seizures are mostly sold in legal markets in Japan, warranting the use of retail price as a proxy for the end-market value of the wild pet trade. Given the variability of price due to many factors, the analysis used both the minimum and maximum price for each species observed in recent years with no adjustment for price inflation over the period of time. The sources of price data included TRAFFIC's systematic physical market survey of reptiles in 2017 (Wakao *et al.*, 2018) and online advertisements, supplemented by making telephone inquiries to retailers where information was scant. For Customs records that use the higher taxonomic classification, a weighted average for the corresponding genus, family or order was calculated from the observed price of species found in seizure records under the respective taxon, matched also by the CITES-listed status.

REVIEW OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JUDICIAL OUTCOMES

Customs records for 2012–2018 included some information regarding procedural outcomes of seizures which are: 1) forfeiture; 2) returned to the country of export; and 3) investigation. The outcomes of investigated cases were not available in the seizure records. However, some cases for which Japan Customs filed charges against the suspects were separately announced on Japan Customs' websites, which were therefore compiled for the analysis. While the complete seizure dataset for 2019 was still not available at the time of this research, the Japan Customs' announcements of charges

between January and August 2019 were checked and incorporated into the analysis.

In addition, incidents that were not intercepted at the border but were discovered and charged afterwards following police investigation within Japan were collected through searching media reports in TRAFFIC's archive of illegal wildlife trade cases and databases of Japanese media reporting⁴.

In terms of prosecution and court outcomes, there are no central databases in Japan accessible by the public.

³ It should be noted that some records were given higher taxonomic categorization such as "turtle" or "bird". They were however still considered as pets because other common usage (i.e. consumption as foods or medicine) is not really known in Japan

⁴ <https://database.yomiuri.co.jp/about/rekishikan/>, <https://database.asahi.com/index.shtml>, <https://mainichi.jp/contents/edu/maisaku/>, http://www2.chuo-u.ac.jp/library/db_sankei.html, <https://www.chunichi.co.jp/database/>

Open source information was reviewed and court observations were made if the incident was still under the legal process. Official requests for information

disclosure were sent to the Public Prosecutor's offices where possible.

SEIZURES REPORTED IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND ILLEGAL EXPORTS FROM JAPAN

Incidents reported outside Japan regarding smuggling attempts for exotic pets that were bound for Japan were collected from media reports in TRAFFIC's Japanese archive and TRAFFIC's global seizure database. Similarly, reports of illegal exports from Japan either serving as origin or transit were collected from these sources as Japan Customs does not compile outbound seizure records.

Taxonomic classification was based primarily on the current CITES species checklist⁵, but if not found

there the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species⁶ and the Reptile Database⁷ were also used as references. Geographic ranges of species were checked on the IUCN Red List or the Reptiles Database. All the numerical analyses were done in Microsoft Excel, while map visualisations were done with TradeMapper. The currency rate was calculated on 21st January (USD=0.0091) and 26th January (ZAR=0.0694) 2020, using OANDA currency converter (<https://www1.oanda.com/currency/converter/>).

⁵ <http://checklist.cites.org/#/en>

⁶ <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>

⁷ <http://www.reptile-database.org/>



RESULTS

RESULTS

INBOUND SEIZURES

INCIDENT OVERVIEW

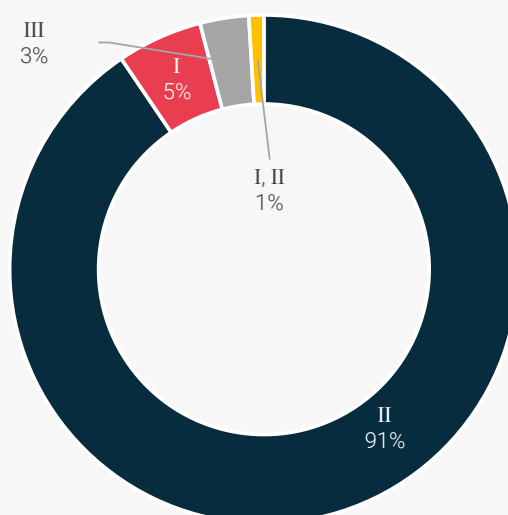
A total of 78 incidents (1,161 specimens) of illegal imports of live and dead animals for the exotic pet trade were intercepted by Japan Customs during the period 2007–2018 for their absence of accompanying permits to import CITES listed species.

CITES LISTINGS

Of all the 1,161 specimens, 91% (1,051 specimens) were described as CITES Appendix II at the time of interception, followed by Appendix I species (63 specimens or 5%), Appendix III species (36 specimens or 3%), while the rest had mixed categorisation (11 specimens or 1%) (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

CITES Appendix listing status of exotic pet specimens seized by Japanese Customs as illegal imports for the period 2007–2018 (N=1,161) (Source: Japan Customs).



TEMPORAL PATTERN

The year 2007 marked the largest number of seizures during the period 2007–2018 with 18 incidents, after which they dropped to only two to six annually (Table 1).

However, there appears to have been a slight resurgence in the number of seizures since 2015, when six to 10 incidents were intercepted annually.

TABLE 1

Number of exotic pet animal seizure incidents at the Japanese border. (2007–2018, source Japan Customs)

YEAR OF SEIZURE*	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS	NUMBER OF SPECIMENS
2007	18	522
2008	5	52
2009	3	18
2010	6	18
2011	5	12
2012	4	35
2013	2	5
2014	3	12
2015	10	162
2016	8	159
2017	6	49
2018	8	117
TOTAL	78	1,161

*Note that the data between 2007 and 2011 record only the dates of the starting point of incident management rather than the actual dates of seizure, leaving the possibility that a small number of cases each year could have been intercepted in the end of the previous year.

VOLUME OF SEIZURES

Incidents with no more than five specimens comprised 54% (43 incidents) and together with seizures of 6 to 30 specimens accounted for more than 86% of the total incidents (Figure 2). There were four exceptionally high volume incidents involving freshwater turtles and

Chinese Crocodile Lizards *Shinisaurus crocodilurus*. Most of the incidents (90%) involved specimens of only a single taxonomic class, except for eight incidents that involved specimens from two or more classes as combinations of mammals, birds and reptiles.

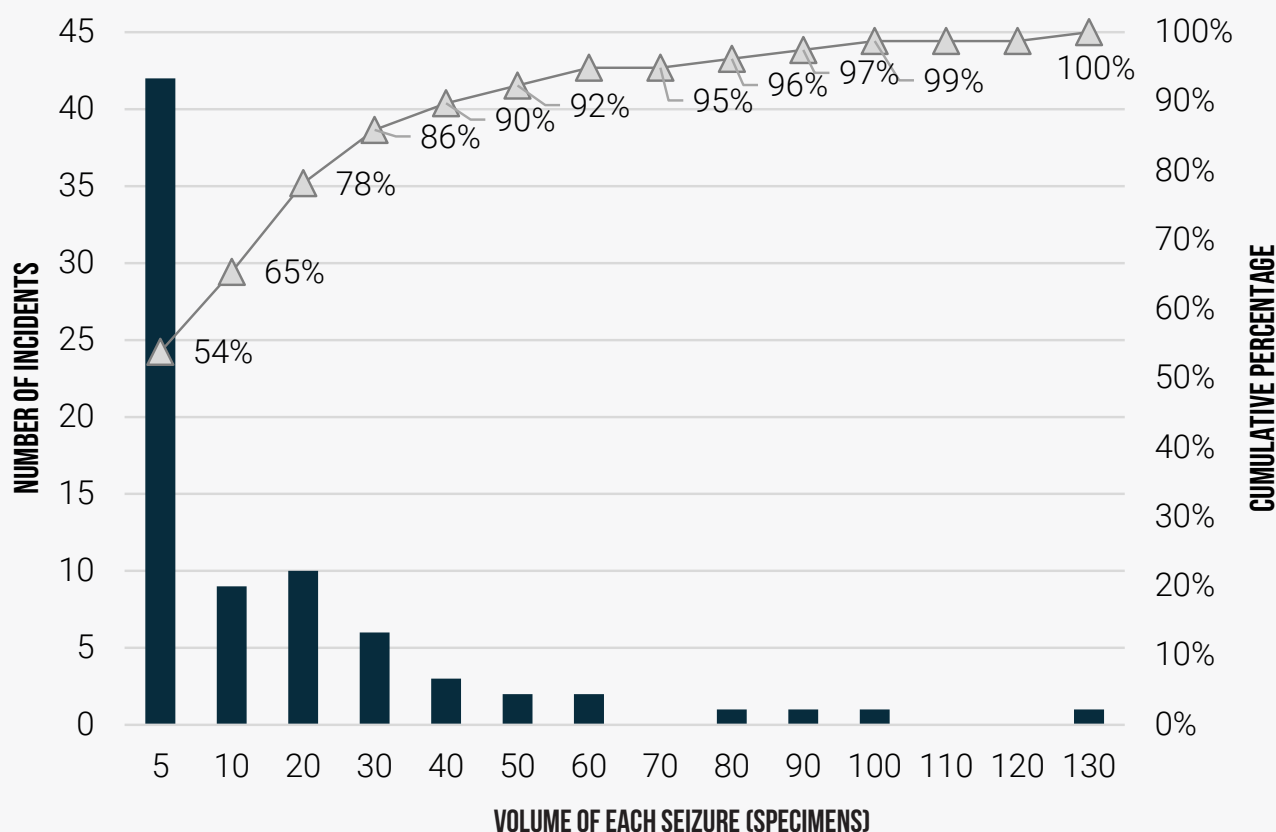


FIGURE 2

Frequency of incidents by the volume of seizures (number of specimens per incident) and cumulative percentage (N=78) (Source: Japan Customs). Numbers on the x-axis indicate the maximum number of specimens for the volume category.

ESTIMATED VALUE

The total estimated value for 35 incidents (499 specimens) seized during the period 2014–2018 reached JPY54.1–125.6 million (USD492,000–1.1million⁸), with the annual average of JPY10.8–25.1 million (USD98,000–228,000) (Figure 3). The year

2016 marked the highest in terms of the estimated value of seizures. The estimated value per incident averaged JPY1.5–3.6 million (USD14,000–33,000) and ranged from JPY4,148–5,600 (USD38–51) to JPY6–12.5 million (USD54,600–113,750) (Table 2).

⁸ JPY1 = USD 0.0091 (at 21st January, 2020)

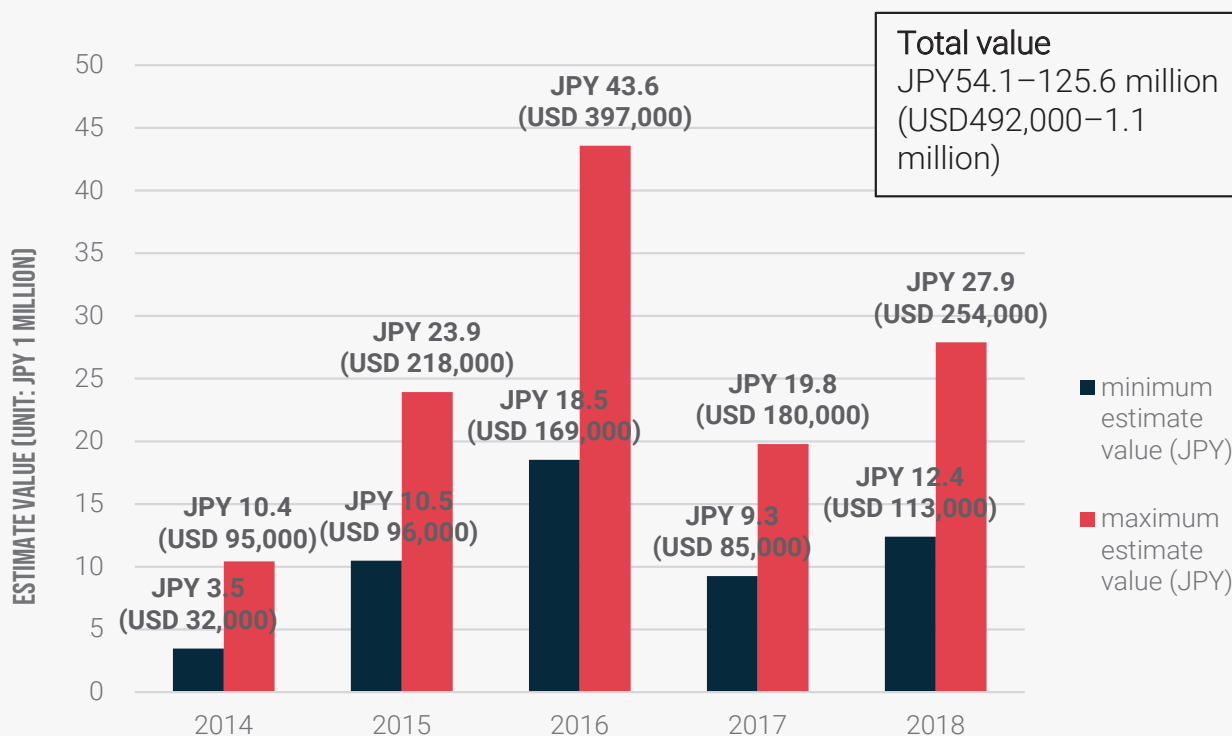


FIGURE 3

Summary of estimated value of incidents for the period 2014–2018 (N=35 incidents). The value was calculated by TRAFFIC based on the retail price observed in Japan during the period (*source of seizure data: Japan Customs*). Note that no inflation adjustment was applied.

TABLE 2

Average, the lowest and the highest estimate value of incidents for the period 2014–2018 (N=35). *Source of seizure data: Japan Customs*.

YEAR OF SEIZURE	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS
Average per incident	JPY1.5–3.6 million (USD14,000–33,000)
Incidents with the lowest estimate	JPY4,148–5,600 (USD38–51)
Incidents with the highest estimate	JPY6–12.5 million (USD54,600–113,750)

Lower value incidents were more common, some 57% had a minimum estimated value not exceeding JPY1 million (USD9,100) (Figure 4). Seven incidents (20%) had particularly low estimated values under JPY100,000 (USD910). The incident with the highest value was estimated to be around JPY6–12.5 million

(USD54,600–113,750), which involved five Small-clawed Otters *Aonyx cinerea*, two wild cats of the genus *Prionailurus* spp., and one hawk-eagle *Spizaetus* spp. Other incidents with a high estimated value involved mammals and birds with high retail price (see Appendix 1 for the list of prices for identified species).

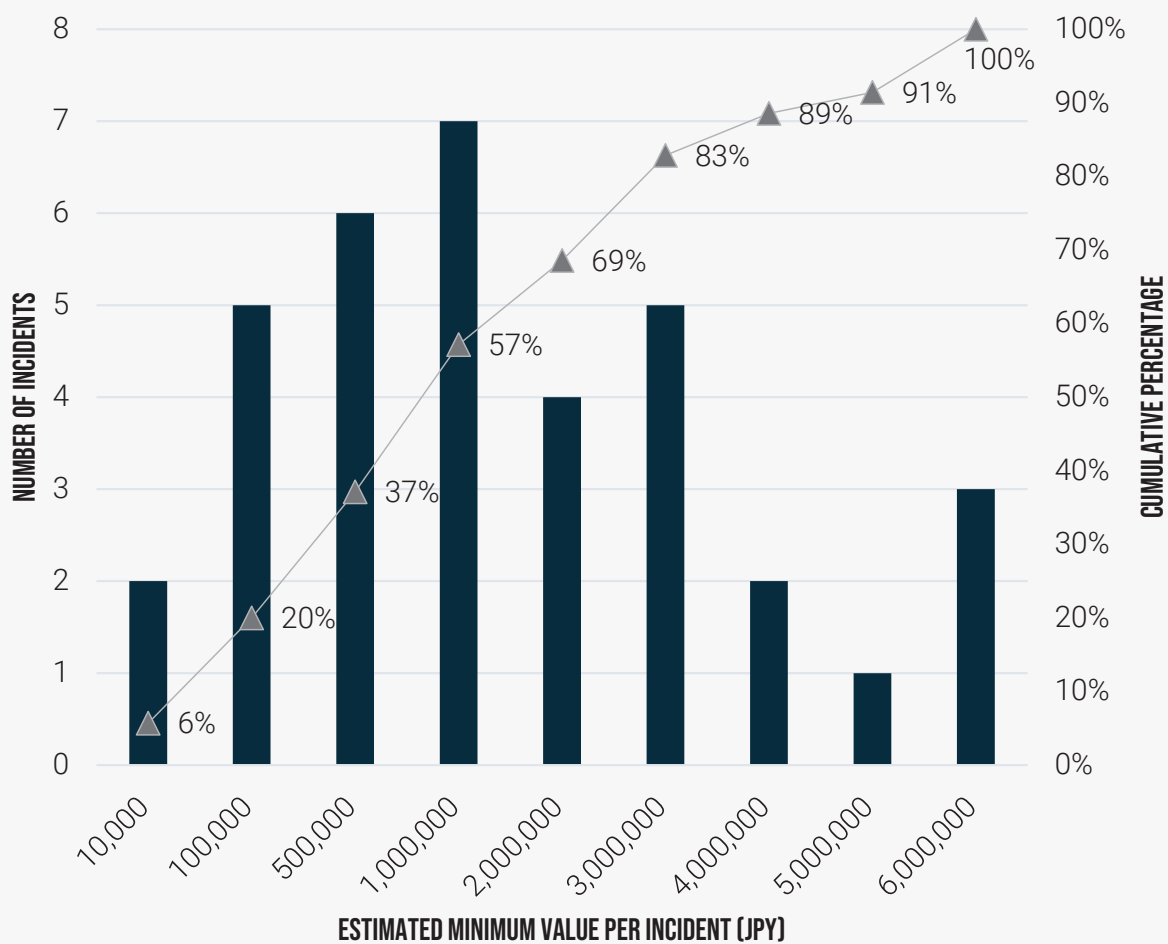


FIGURE 4

Frequency of incidents observed by the estimated minimum value per incident (JPY) (N=36). The value was calculated by TRAFFIC based on retail price observed in Japan during the period.

Source of seizure data: Japan Customs.



TAXA

Out of the total 1,161 specimens seized during the period 2007–2018, 510 (44%) were recorded with the Japanese name at species level, resulting in the identification of 44 unique species (see Appendix 1 for the list of identified species). Another 651 specimens were recorded under general terms such as “turtles”, or “birds”.

Reptiles were by far the most highly intercepted taxon, with the seizure of 827 specimens (71.2% of the total) from 48 incidents (Figure 5). Looking at a lower taxonomic level, 67% (551 specimens) were turtles (order Testudines), of which 242 were recorded only as “turtles”. The remaining 276 specimens were of the order Squamata.

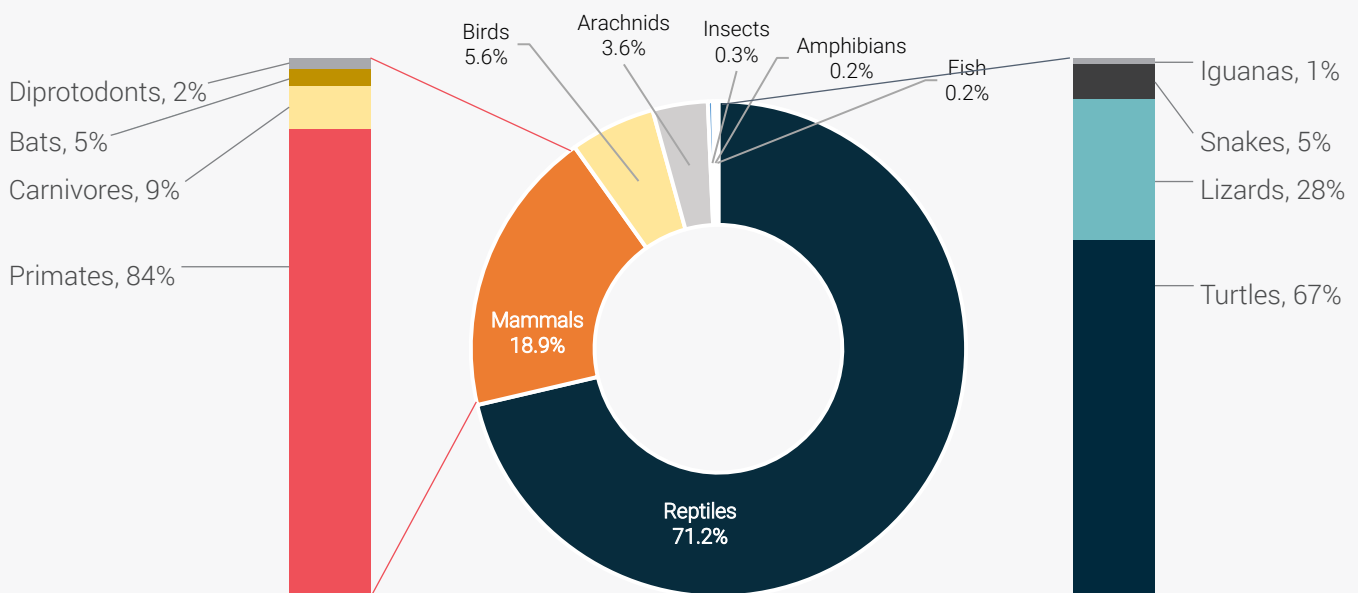


FIGURE 5

Taxonomic composition of animals seized at Japan Customs branches (N=1,161) (2007–2018)

Source: Japan Customs.

Mammals ranked second with seizures of 219 specimens (18.8%) from 22 incidents, followed by birds with 65 specimens (5.6%) from nine incidents. Among the mammal species, there were 185 primates (order Primates, 85% of the mammals) and 10 bats (order *Chiroptera*), which are both banned for import under the Infectious Disease Control Law (Table 3).

Most of the primates were slow lorises *Nycticebus* spp. (119 specimens). Seizures from other classes were scarce, with 42 tarantulas (family Theraphosidae), four Satan's Beetles *Dynastes satanas*, two Asian Arowanas *Scleropages formosus*, and two Axotols *Ambystoma mexicanum*, representing only 4.3% when combined.

TABLE 3

Seizures of species/taxa whose import is prohibited by the Infectious Disease Control Law.

Source: Japan Customs (N=195 specimens).

*Import of primates from the USA, Indonesia, Guyana, Cambodia, Suriname, China, Philippines, and Viet Nam for scientific purposes or for display at government approved facilities is permitted on the condition that official sanitary certificates are submitted. Import of bats from all regions is prohibited.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NUMBER OF SPECIMENS
PRIMATES		TOTAL: 185
Pygmy Slow Loris	<i>Nycticebus pygmaeus</i>	94
Slow loris	<i>Nycticebus spp.</i>	21
Sunda Slow Loris	<i>Nycticebus coucang</i>	4
Bush babies	<i>Galago spp.</i>	8
Tarsier	Tarsiidae	7
Common Marmoset	<i>Callithrix jacchus</i>	6
Pygmy Marmoset	<i>Callithrix pygmaea</i>	1
Cotton-top Tamarin	<i>Saguinus oedipus</i>	1
Negro Tamarin	<i>Saguinus midas</i>	1
Monkey	Primates	42
BATS		TOTAL: 10
Megabat	Pteropodidae	6
Bat	Chiroptera	4



TRAFFICKING PATTERNS

EXPORTERS

Overall, 13 countries/territories were identified as the immediate points of origin prior to Japan for exotic pets. More than half the incidents were exported from Southeast Asian countries (55%, 43 incidents), followed by East Asian countries/territories (36%, 28 incidents) (Figure 6). Interception of incidents from Thailand was the highest (25 incidents, 32% of the

total), followed by mainland China (21 incidents, 27%), and Indonesia (10 incidents, 13%). Mainland China ranked the first in terms of the volume of specimens (435 specimens, 37% of the total), followed by Thailand (377 specimens, 32%) and Hong Kong (140 specimens, 12%).



FIGURE 6

Immediate points of origin for exotic pets seized by Japan Customs for the period 2007–2018 (N=1,161 specimens) (source: Japan Customs). The thickness of each line reflects the volume of specimens involved. Thirteen countries/territories were identified as exporter, with Thailand the most prevalent in the number of incidents intercepted in Japan, and mainland China ranked the top in terms of the volume of specimens.

IMPLICATED COUNTRIES/TERRITORIES BY TAXA

The taxonomic composition of seizures differed depending on the country/territory from which smuggled specimens arrived. Seizures of reptile species originated from 11 different countries/territories, with incidents from mainland China

having the highest proportion, both in terms of numbers of incidents and specimens (21 incidents, 428 specimens) (Figure 7). The number of seizures from Hong Kong was only four, but the volume of specimens seized was second to mainland China, with

140 specimens. When examined at lower taxonomic levels, tortoises and freshwater turtles were the major components of seizures from mainland China, Hong Kong and the USA, whereas species of the order Squamata, especially monitor lizards, were more commonly derived from Indonesia and the Philippines. There were several species transported not from their native country/territory, including Pig-nosed Turtle *Carettochelys insculpta*, native to Australia, Indonesia,

and Papua New Guinea, and Black Spotted Turtle *Geoclemys hamiltonii* native to several countries in South Asia which arrived in Japan from mainland China. Furthermore, species transported from Hong Kong were all non-native, including the Chinese Crocodile Lizard native to mainland China and Viet Nam, and the Arakan Forest Turtle *Heosemys depressa* occurring only in Myanmar.



FIGURE 7

Exporters of reptiles seized by Japan Customs for the period 2007–2018 (N=827 specimens).

Source: Japan Customs. Mainland China was responsible for the largest volume of specimens.

In terms of mammals, four countries were identified as immediate points of origin, with Thailand comprising the majority of seizures with 15 out of the total 22 mammal-related incidents (173 specimens), followed by Indonesia (four incidents) (Figure 8). All but one of the primate species exported from Thailand were non-

native to Thailand, and included Pygmy Slow Loris *Nycticebus pygmaeus* and primates native to South America (e.g. Pygmy Marmoset *Callithrix pygmaea* and Cotton-topped Tamarin *Saguinus oedipus*), and bush babies *Galago* spp., which are native to the southern and central regions of Africa.



FIGURE 8

Immediate points of origin for mammals seized by Japan Customs for the period 2007–2018 (N=219 specimens). *Source: Japan Customs.* Interception of contraband from Thailand was prominent.

Transport routes into Japan for birds largely overlapped with those of mammals, as six out of nine incidents involving birds were intercepted along with other mammal species. Thailand, Indonesia and

Singapore were involved (six, two and one incident respectively) (Figure 9). All the identified bird species were exported from countries where they are naturally distributed.



FIGURE 9

Exporters of birds seized by Japan Customs for the period 2007–2018 (N=65 specimens). *Source: Japan Customs.* Thailand was responsible for the largest volume of specimens.



MODES OF TRANSPORT

Fifty-one out of a total of 78 incidents (65%) involving 951 specimens were transported via passenger airlines, followed by international mail (24%: 19

incidents with 189 specimens), air cargo (8%: six incidents with 11 specimens) and cruise ships (3%: two incidents with 10 specimens) (Figure 10).

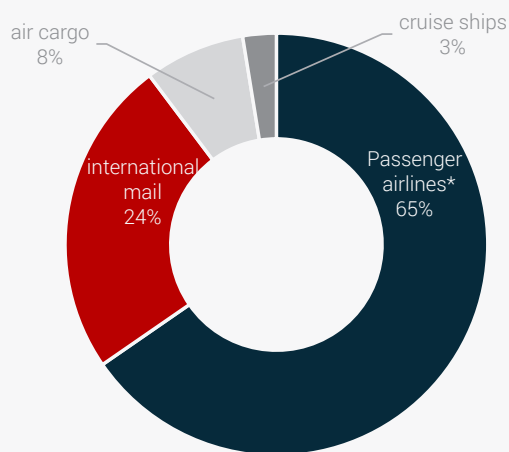


FIGURE 10

Transportation methods observed in incoming seizures of exotic pets at Japan Customs branches during the period 2007–2018 (N=78)

Source: Japan Customs.

*Passenger airlines indicates airline passengers' belongings/luggage.

Transportation methods appeared to differ depending on taxa as shown in Figure 11. All the incidents involving mammals and birds were transported via passenger airlines whereas other methods were observed in seizures of reptiles, including the

international mail which was associated with 15 incidents. Although incidents involving arachnids, insects, fish, and amphibians were rare, detected cases were transported via mail or air cargo, which were relatively minor methods.

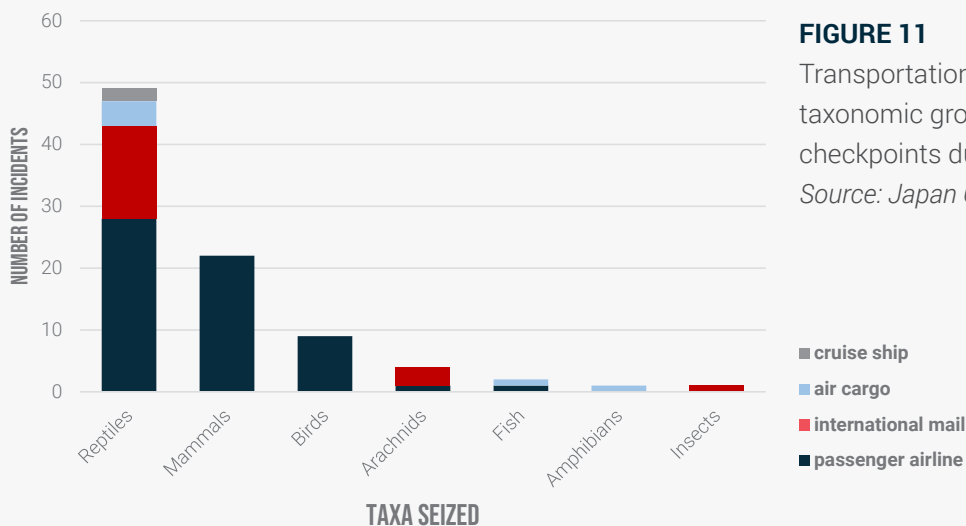


FIGURE 11

Transportation methods examined by taxonomic group seized at Japanese border checkpoints during the period 2007–2018.

Source: Japan Customs.

POINTS OF DETECTION

Seizure records from 2012 onwards contained information from specific Japan Customs branches which made and reported the seizures, whereby 12 branches across Japan were identified from 41 incidents between 2012 and 2018 (Figure 12). Narita International Airport intercepted the highest number

with 7 incidents, followed by Kansai International Airport (9 incidents), and Tokyo International Post Office (5). Other identified Customs branches reported one or two seizures. The only seizure from a cruise ship was reported from Okinawa, the southernmost prefecture.

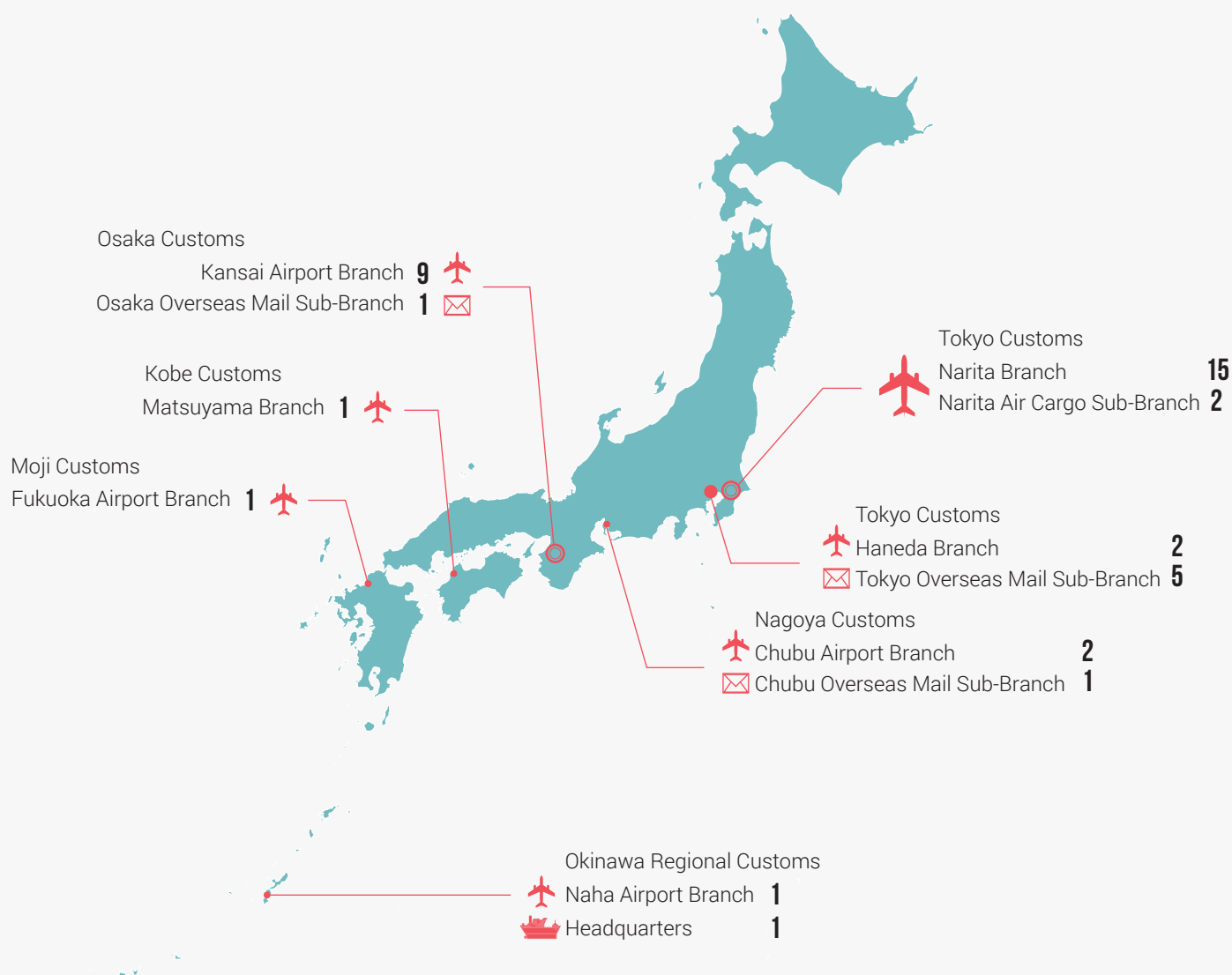


FIGURE 12

Map of Japan depicting places of seizure of exotic pet animals during the period 2012–2018. A total of 12 Japan Customs branches made 41 seizures. The highest number of seizure were made at the Narita International Airport.

RESULTS

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JUDICIAL OUTCOMES

MOVING INVESTIGATIONS TO PENALTIES

INVESTIGATIONS OF SEIZURES BY JAPAN CUSTOMS

Forty-one incident reports of seizures recorded by Japan Customs from 2012 to 2018 contained information about the law enforcement actions taken following the seizure (Figure 13). Twenty-five incidents (61%) out of the 41 went through criminal investigations conducted by Japan Customs or joint investigations conducted with police, whereas 16 incidents (39%) resulted in forfeiture or returning of the specimens to the country/territory of export. Notably, none of the seizures made from the international mail service was criminally investigated despite being the second-most frequent mode of transport identified following passenger airlines⁹.

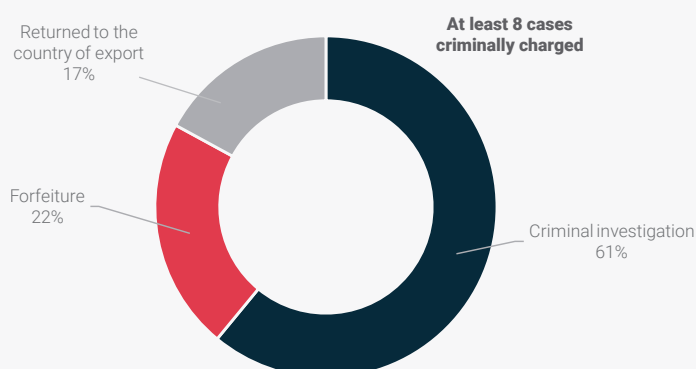


FIGURE 13

Overview of actions taken following inbound seizures of exotic pet animals by Japan Customs during the period 2012–2018. Source: Japan Customs (N=41).

Note that information about actions taken following incidents was only available from 2012.

At least eight out of 25 cases investigated ended with suspects being charged and were sent to the prosecutors' office. Information on another 17 cases was not available. Among eight incidents with accused persons, seven ended with prosecution of at least one individual involved. While Japan Customs seizure data for 2019 were still unavailable at the time of writing,

an official Customs press release reported that suspects were charged for a seizure made in January 2019 involving shipping of reptiles from Indonesia on a passenger airline (case 12, Table 4). This brings to eight the total number of seizures known to have ended in prosecution since 2012.

INVESTIGATIONS INITIATED BY THE POLICE

Research identified four additional incidents (in 2007, 2008, 2013, and 2018) involving six suspects during the period 2007–2018 that were not intercepted at the border but were discovered through police

investigations into domestic "legal" sales of smuggled specimens (i.e. laundering), or investigation initiated from tip-offs, which led to the prosecution and charging of suspects for illegal import (Table 4).

⁹ It should be noted that the Customs Law exempts international mails of monetary value below JPY200,000 = USD1,820. (<https://www.customs.go.jp/tsukan/yubin/yubin210216.htm>)

TABLE 4

Detail of cases which ended with prosecution of suspects for possible offences related to illegal import of exotic pet animals (2007–2019). Source: Japan Customs, media reports.

NO. 10	DATE OF SEIZURE/ SMUGGLING	COUNTRY OF EXPORT/ MODE OF TRANSPORT	COMPOSITION OF SEIZURE/(CITES APPENDIX) 11	NO. OF DEFENDANTS/ CHARGED WITH	IDENTITY OF DEFENDANTS NATIONALITY AND GENDER, ID: OCCUPATION (AGE)	ROLE AND COURT OUTCOME I = IMPRISONMENT, P = PROBATION F = FINE (JPY)
2007						
1	Feb. 28th	Thailand (Passenger airline)	5 Radiated Tortoise (I)	2 - FEFTA - LCES - the Infectious Diseases Control Law	Japanese males A: taxi driver (64) B: unemployed (28)	Both smugglers I = 1 year and 10 months, F = 800,000 I = 1 year and 6 months, P = 3 years, F = 400,000 (12/6/2008)
	Sep. 17th		3 Pygmy Slow Loris (I)			
	Oct. 1st		3 Pygmy Slow Loris (I)			
	Nov. 2th		3 Pygmy Slow Loris (I)			
2008						
2	May	Egypt (air)	3 Desert Monitor (I)	1 - FEFTA - LCES	Japanese male C: pet shop owner (37)	Smuggler: I = two years and 6 months, P = 4 years F = 500,000 (4/3/2009)
2013						
3	Jun. 11th	Germany (Passenger airline)	9 Day Gecko (II)	1 - FEFTA	Japanese male D: pet shop owner (35)	Smuggler: F = 300,000
	Sep. 16th					
2014						
4	Jan. 23rd	Singapore (Passenger airline)	4 Northern Common Cuscus (II) 2 Malayan Civet (NC)	2 Customs Act	Japanese males E: animal dealer (48) F: self-employed (38)	Status of conviction unknown
2017						
5	Apr. 7th	Thailand (Passenger airline)	4 Pygmy Slow Lorises (I)	1 Customs Act	Japanese male G: unemployed (54)	Smuggler: I = 1 year and 6 months, P = 3 years, F = 500,000 (Customs Act, 6/3/2018)

¹⁰ References: case 1; 毎日新聞 2008/1/16「希少 ビグミスローロリス密輸」、共同通信 2008/6/12「希少サル密輸の男に実刑」東京地裁「保護政策揺るがす」、毎日新聞2008/11/12「種の保存法違反：ペット店経営者を再逮捕 トカゲを密輸」、特別非営利活動法人 トラ・ソウ基金2010/12/6「動物の愛護及び管理に関する法律の改正に関する要望書」https://www.jtcf.jp/img_showcase/showcase_suggest_02_h.pdf, Lieutenant Fukuhara in litt, February 2020. 3; 読売新聞 2013/10/24「ヒルヤモリ密輸容疑」、千葉日報 2013/10/24「ペットショップ経営者逮捕 希少ヤモリを密輸容疑」、4; 読売新聞2014/2/25「バッグに希少動物クスクス、鳴き声で密輸発覚」、5; 千葉日報 2017/9/11「腹に絶滅恐れ「スローロリス」4匹 密輸未遂容疑で運び屋?逮捕 千葉県警など」、読売新聞2017/9/12「腹に隠しサル密輸未遂容疑」、千葉日報2018/1/16「希少サル密輸に懲役2年6月求刑 千葉地検「反省全くみられず」」<https://www.chibanippo.co.jp/news/national/468536>. 6; 千葉日報オンライン2018/5/12「動物密輸、鳴き声で発覚 白井の61歳男、容疑で逮捕 成田税関と空港署」<https://www.chibanippo.co.jp/news/national/497988>. 7; 毎日新聞2018/5/9「カメ密輸」容疑で男2人逮捕 絶滅危惧種39匹、関空で、産経新聞2018/6/20【衝撃事件の核心】「タートルショック」カメ1匹40万円、カワウソ100万円…密輸絶えない希少野生動物」<https://www.sankei.com/news/180620/wst1806200003-n1.html>. 8; 千葉日報2019/2/28「希少サル5匹密輸未遂 成田空港、鳴き声で発覚 男一人起訴」<https://www.chibanippo.co.jp/news/national/574325>. 9; 朝日新聞2018/11/27「狙われるカワウソ」、10; 毎日新聞2019/6/11「密輸のサルは新種? 成田空港でスーツケースから押収 カメやネズミも」<https://mainichi.jp/articles/20190611/k00/00m/040/205000c>. 11; 毎日新聞2019/6/11「密輸のサル、新種の可能性＝成田空港で摘発―千葉県警」<https://www.jiji.com/jc/article?k=2019061100684&g=soc>. 11; 毎日新聞2019/1/23「カワウソ密輸容疑で逮捕＝男2人、タイから5匹―警視庁など」、朝日新聞2019/1/23「カワウソ密輸「簡単なバイト」バッグに3匹詰め込み…」、12; jiji.com 2019/4/3「鍋の中身はニシキヘビ＝密輸容疑で男逮捕―大阪税関など」<https://www.jiji.com/jc/article?k=2019040300934&g=soc>

¹¹ Scientific name: Radiated Tortoises *Astrochelys radiata*, Pygmy Slow Lorises *Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Desert Monitor *Varanus griseus*, Day Gecko *Phelsuma spp.*, Northern Common Cuscus *Phalanger orientalis*, Malayan Civet *Viverra zibetha*, Spotted Little Owl *Athene brama*, Collared Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena*, Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus spp.*, Binturong *Arctictis binturong*, African Dormice *Graphiurus spp.*, Four-toed Hedgehog *Atelerix albiventris*, Yellow Pond Turtle *Mauremys mutica*, Four-eyed Turtle *Sacalia quadriocellata*, Eastern Box Turtle *Terrapene arolina*, Chinese Box Turtle *Cuora flavomarginata*, Indochinese Box Turtle *Cuora galbinifrons*, Chinese Three-striped Box Turtle *Cuora trilineata*, Keeled Box Turtle *Cuora mouhotii*, Reeves' Turtle *Mauremys reevesii*, Sunda Slow Loris *Nycticebus coucang*, Pygmy Marmoset *Callithrix pygmaea*, Small-clawed Otter *Aonyx cinerea*, Galagos *Galago spp.*, Common Marmoset *Callithrix jacchus*, Red-handed Tamarin *Saguinus midas*, African Spurred Tortoise *Geochelone sulcata*, Central Bearded Dragon *Pogona vitticeps*, Bamboo Rat *Rhizomyia spp.*, African Dormice *Graphiurus*, Snakes *Serpentes*, lizard *Tiliqua spp.*

NO. ¹⁰	DATE OF SEIZURE/ SMUGGLING	COUNTRY OF EXPORT/ MODE OF TRANSPORT	COMPOSITION OF SEIZURE/(CITES APPENDIX) ¹¹	NO. OF DEFENDANTS/ CHARGED WITH	IDENTITY OF DEFENDANTS NATIONALITY AND GENDER, ID: OCCUPATION (AGE)	ROLE AND COURT OUTCOME I = IMPRISONMENT, P = PROBATION F = FINE (JPY)
6	Apr. 7th	Thailand (Passenger airline)	12 Spotted Little Owl (II) 2 Collared Scops Owl (II) 1 Hawk-Eagle (II) 1 Binturong (III) 6 African Dormice (NC) 2 Four-toed Hedgehog (NC)	1 Customs Act	Japanese male H: construction worker (61)	Smuggler: I = 10 months (Customs Act, 22/8/2019)
2018						
7	Mar. 29th	Mainland China (Passenger airline)	2 Yellow Pond Turtle (II) 17 Four-eyed Turtle (II) 6 Eastern Box Turtle (II) 2 Chinese Box Turtle (II) 2 Indochinese Box Turtle (II) 1 Chinese Three-striped Box Turtle (II) 7 Keeled Box Turtle (II) 2 Reeves' Turtle (III)	2 Customs Act	Japanese males I: office worker (29) J: office worker (28)	Status of conviction unknown
8	Apr. 16th	Thailand (Passenger airline)	4 Sunda Slow Loris (I) 1 Pygmy Marmoset (II)	1 Customs Act	Japanese male K: measuring instrument designer (71)	Smuggler: = 1 year, P = 3 years, F = 300,000 (Customs Act, 9/4/2019)
9	Jun. 14th	Thailand (Passenger airline)	3 Small-clawed Otter (II)	2 - FEFTA - Customs Act	Japanese males L: Unemployed (52) M: unknown (22)	Smuggler: (see case 11*) Seller: I = 1 year and 6 months, P = 3 years
10	Sep. 10th	Thailand (Passenger airline)	2 Galago (II) 3 Common Marmoset (II) 1 Red-handed Tamarin (II) 4 African Spurred Tortoise (II) 2 Central Bearded Dragon (NC) 4 Bamboo Rat (NC) 1 African Dormice (NC)	3 Customs Act	Japanese males N: pet shop owner (68) O: automotive industry worker (40) P: painter (40)	Instructor: I = 1 year and 8 months, F = 1,000,000 Middlemen: I = 4 months, P = 3 years Smuggler: I = 6 months, P = 3 years, F = 200,000 (Customs Act, 26/8/2019)
11	Oct. 4th	Thailand (Passenger airline)	5 Small-clawed Otter (II)	2 Customs Act	Japanese males L: unemployed (52) Q: unknown (24)	Instructor: I = 2 years, P = 4 years Smuggler: I = 1 year and 6 months, P = 3 years
2019						
12	Jan. 31st	Indonesia (Passenger airline)	16 Snakes (II) 8 lizards (NC)	1 Customs Act	Japanese male R: office worker (53)	Smuggler: I = 1 year and 6 months, P = 3 years, F = 300,000 (Customs Act, 13/6/2019)

Incidents that were being seized at Japanese Customs branches are coloured in light blue (8 cases), while case investigation initiated by the police are not coloured (4 cases).

PROSECUTIONS TO CONVICTIONS

SUMMARY OF PROSECUTED CASES

At least 12 cases during the period of 2007–August 2019 were found to have resulted in suspects being prosecuted, following charges laid by Japan Customs (8 cases) and as a result of police investigations conducted after the contraband passed Customs (4 cases) (Table 4). The conviction status of the defendants could not be confirmed in two cases (case 4 and case 7). All the incidents intercepted by Japan Customs ended with prosecutions relating to possible offences against the Customs Act, whilst the other four incidents found within Japan were charged under FEFTA (case 3), FEFTA and the Customs Act (case 9), FEFTA and LCES (case 2), or FEFTA, LCES and the Infectious Diseases Control Law (case 1). It is not known under which law sentences were given for the latter three cases.

Eight of the 12 cases occurred in the three years since 2017, with 2018 seeing the highest number of five cases. Smuggling from Thailand comprised the majority (seven cases) and was characterised by the trafficking of mammal species. In terms of the volume of seizures, the earliest of the 2018 smuggling incidents from mainland China (case 7) was the largest involving

39 freshwater turtles of eight Appendix II species.

The value of contraband in cases after 2014 was estimated based on recent retail prices collected in this study. The estimated price ranged from a minimum of JPY1.2 million (USD10,920) (case 4), to a maximum of JPY5.2–9.4 million (USD47,680–86,268) (case 6).

OFFENDERS

The number of defendants in each case ranged from one to three, with a total of 18 defendants identified between 2007 and 2019 (Table 4). Of these, court outcomes were confirmed for 14, all of whom were found to be convicted. All the defendants were Japanese nationals. Their age and types of occupation varied, but at least four of them are/were pet shop owners (ID: C, D, E and N). One individual was involved in two cases that took place in 2018 (ID: L in case 9 and 11), and conviction was given once. Besides, four more individuals were found to have one or more past criminal records of wildlife trafficking in Japan or elsewhere (ID: D; convicted for attempted smuggling of 79 geckos (infraorder Gekkota) from New Caledonia in 2017 (franceinfo, 2018), E; prosecuted for smuggling Goffin's Cockatoo *Cacatua goffiniana* from Indonesia in

2001 (Jiji, 2001; Nikkei, 2001), F; convicted in Australia and South Africa for attempted smuggling or illegal collection of reptiles in 2012 (Japan Today, 2012) and 2017 (Asahi digital, 2018), and N; convicted three times for smuggling and five times for illegal domestic transactions (Yui Naruse, pers. obs. 21st August 2019, trial hearing at Chiba District Court)).

There was at least one case (case 9) identified as tied to a criminal organisation, where a group of scammers was alleged to have been behind an otter-smuggling operation, although the two known convicts were both end-actors: a smuggler (L) and a seller of animals in Japan (M). The other cases had no clear information implicating connection to criminal organisations.

SENTENCING

The court processes were usually concluded approximately two to four months after the charges

were made, or five to 10 months after the original incidents of seizure/smuggling.

Of the 14 individuals convicted, three were sentenced without suspension of their sentence¹² (ID: A, H and N). One individual with past conviction records for illegal wildlife trade (ID: N) was given one year and eight months imprisonment and a fine of JPY1 million (USD9,100). Another got one year and 10 months imprisonment and a fine of JPY800,000 (USD7,280) (ID: A). The other who received 10 months imprisonment and was released after the sentence was announced for having spent an equivalent period of time in a detention centre (ID: H). An additional 10 individuals were granted suspension of sentences of three to four years. Whether any of these convicts

violated their probation to have their sentences implemented is unknown.

Fines were imposed on nine defendants involved in seven incidents (ID: A, B, C, D, G, K, N, P and R), with the total amount reaching JPY4.3 million (USD39,130), and individually ranging from JPY200,000 to 1 million (average of JPY478,000; USD4,348). No case was observed where the fine exceeded the estimated retail value of the specimens involved; the average proportion of fines to the estimated value of contraband in four cases since 2014 ranged from 13% to 29%.

RESULTS

SEIZURES REPORTED IN OTHER COUNTRIES/TERRITORIES

OVERVIEW OF INCIDENTS

Reviewing overseas media reports revealed at least 28 smuggling attempts implicating Japan as the possible destination since 2007 (Figure 14), involving at least 1,207 specimens and nine countries/territories as the place of seizures. The country with the most frequent reports was Australia with nine incidents, followed by Thailand (8 incidents), and Indonesia (4 incidents). Many incidents were also reported from countries/territories that had never appeared in Japan Customs seizures, including Australia, India, New Caledonia (France), Argentina, Venezuela and South Africa. The most commonly seized taxa were reptiles, especially skinks and freshwater turtles. The nationality of the suspects was reported to be Japanese in all except one incident. Out of the 28 seizures, 25 were reported to have taken place at international airports, two at the site of animal collection, and one at a port.

SEIZURES OF NON-CITES SPECIES

Among the 1,207 seized specimens, at least 494 specimens (41%) were identified to be non-CITES listed taxa (Table 5). There are likely more non-CITES species seized, however, in the majority of cases information on taxa was not specific enough (e.g. "lizards") to determine the status or classification of individual species. A prominent example is Australian protected reptiles such as the Shingleback Skink *Tiliqua rugosa*, where a total of 110 specimens were

seized from at least eight incidents between 2008 and 2019. The Red-eyed Crocodile Skink *Tribolonotus gracilis* and blue-tongued skinks *Tiliqua spp.* are also popular in Japanese markets and were also seized in Indonesia in large numbers. Furthermore, a large number (over 258 in total) of non-listed beetle species were seized at international airports in Argentina (2008) and Venezuela (2018).

¹² Under the Japanese Penal Code, any person satisfying designated preconditions who has been sentenced to imprisonment with or without work for not more than 3 years or a fine of not more than JPY500,000, execution of the sentence may, in light of circumstances, be suspended for a period of not less than 1 year but not more than 5 years from the day on which the sentence becomes final and binding

TABLE 5

A list of non-CITES species (as of April 2020) reported in overseas seizures implicating Japan.

Source media reports, 2007–2019.

Note: The majority of incidents reported did not include specific enough information on the taxa involved to determine whether or not seized specimens were CITES-listed. The table excludes all such ambiguous cases and thus likely underrepresents/underestimates the variety and number of non-listed species actually seized.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	SEIZURE REPORTING COUNTRY	NUMBER OF SPECIMENS
Shingleback Skink	<i>Tiliqua rugosa</i>	Australia	110
Stag beetles	Lucanidae	Argentina, Venezuela	at least 258
Rhinoceros beetles	Dynastinae		
Red-eyed Crocodile Skink	<i>Tribolonotus gracilis</i>	Indonesia	at least 65
Blue-tongued skinks	<i>Tiliqua spp.</i> (excluding <i>T. rugosa</i>)	Indonesia, Australia	at least 44
Sailfin lizards	<i>Hydrosaurus spp.</i>	Philippines	8
Water snakes	<i>Nerodia spp.</i>	Philippines	6
Woodchuck	<i>Marmota monax</i>	Thailand	4
Jumping mice	Dipodidae	Thailand	4
Bearded dragons	<i>Pogona spp.</i>	Australia	1
Centipedes	Chilopoda	India	unknown
TOTAL			AT LEAST 500

OFFENDERS

At least four Japanese suspects identified, judging by their names, were repeat offenders, having been arrested or convicted for illegal collection or smuggling (or smuggling attempts) of wildlife, with two of them arrested at least twice within the space of one year. For instance, one Japanese male was arrested for attempting to smuggle various reptiles which are popular in the Japanese market (Green Tree Pythons *Morelia viridis* and Shingleback Skinks) from Indonesia in May 2018 (Tangerang Online, 2018) and from Australia in June 2019 (The Japan Times, 2019), and later in September the same year was convicted in South Africa for illegal collection of Armadillo Girdled Lizard *Ouroborus cataphractus* (Times LIVE, 2019). Another notable characteristic was the involvement of young Japanese female suspects, possibly recruited

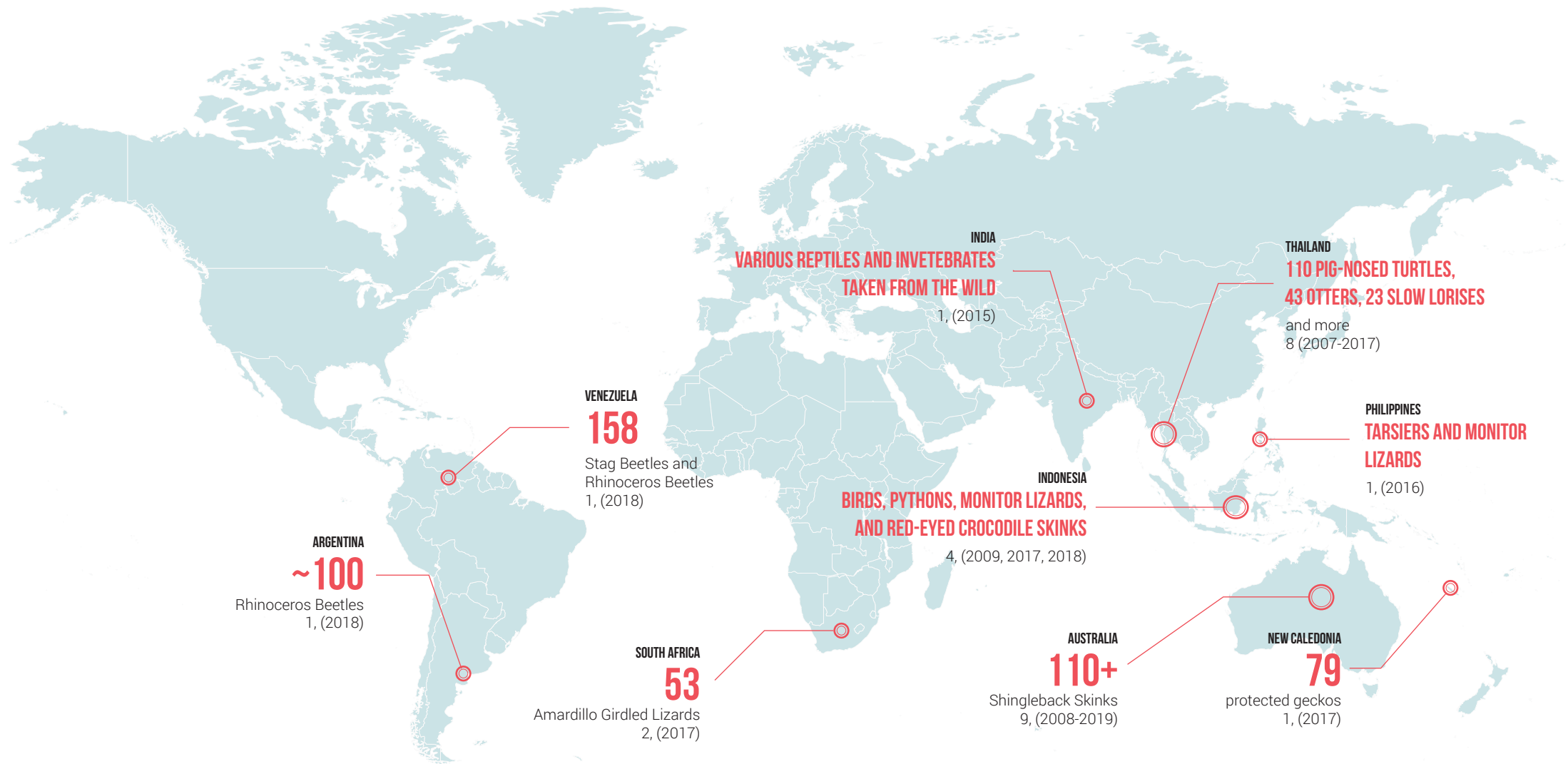
as mules by criminal organisations. In one incident, a 22 year-old university student was arrested in 2017 for attempting to smuggle otters from Thailand (Nikkan Cyzo, 2017). In another incident, a 27 year-old female was convicted in 2018 for attempting to smuggle 19 Shingleback Skinks from Australia (Sueie, 2019).

Although information regarding the penalties imposed on offenders was sparse, seven out of nine identified offenders with prison sentences were given less than a year, while the other two convictions involved in incidents in South Africa were given a choice of a much longer sentence or higher fines (i.e. either 13-years imprisonment or ZAR1 million (USD69,000¹³), and six-years imprisonment or a fine of ZAR300,000 (USD20,700) (Sunday Times, 2018)).

¹³ ZAR1 = USD0.069 at 26th January 2019

FIGURE 14

Significant seizures in countries which reported interceptions of exotic pet animals bound for Japan during the period 2007–2019 (source: media reports). The size of the red circles represents the number of incidents reported, while the actual number is put before the year of seizures. Note that the location of a dot on the map does not represent the actual GPS location of the seizures but rather identifies the incident to country level.





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RESULTS

ILLEGAL EXPORTS FROM JAPAN

JAPANESE ENDEMIC/NATIVE SPECIES TO ASIAN COUNTRIES

A total of eight incidents where exotic pets were trafficked from (seven incidents) or transiting Japan (one incident) were identified between 2010 and 2019, with all but one intercepted outside of Japan (Table 6). The countries/territories of detection included the USA, Hong Kong, Belgium, mainland China, and Thailand. Reptiles comprised the largest number of specimens seized (643 specimens of turtles and tortoises), followed by 127 insects (beetles) and amphibians (10 newts). No incident involving mammals, birds or fish was identified.

Three incidents involving species endemic to Japan, namely, Japanese Pond Turtles *Mauremys japonica*, (case 3, Table 6), Ryukyu Black-breasted Leaf Turtle *Geoemyda japonica* (case 6), and Ryukyu Spiny Newt *Echinotriton andersoni* (case 5). Of these, all but the Ryukyu Spiny Newt are listed in CITES Appendix II. Japan's domestic regulations protect the Ryukyu Spiny Newt as well as the Ryukyu Black-breasted Leaf Turtle, both listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, by prohibiting wild harvest and export. Although not endemic to Japan, Japanese Rhinoceros Beetles *Trypoxylus dichotomus*, were also intercepted in Thailand in 2019 (case 8).

The largest seizure in terms of the number of specimens involved took place in Japan in 2015 (case 4), where a total of 391 native freshwater turtles (*Mauremys japonica* and *M. mutica kami*) were found in the personal luggage of two Chinese nationals leaving from Chubu International Airport (there is uncertainty as to whether they were meant for pets or consumption, or both). Apart from mainland China, Hong Kong was the point of interception in two incidents with some 60 Ryukyu Black-breasted Leaf Turtles from Japan seized in 2018 (case 6). The Japanese perpetrator in this incident was sentenced to one-year imprisonment by a Hong Kong Court (Asahi digital, 2019).

TABLE 6

Illegal exports of exotic pet animals from Japan, found in media reports for the period 2007–2019.

*Specimens are possibly subspecies (*M. mutica kami*) which is endemic to the Nansei Islands of Japan.

NO. ¹⁴	SEIZURE	COUNTRY OF SEIZURE	SPECIES INVOLVED			PLACE OF SEIZURE / FOUND FROM SUSPECT / KNOWN OUTCOME
			COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	NO. OF SPECIMENS	
1	August 2010	USA	Turtle	Testudines	42	Honolulu International Airport / checked luggage Japanese male / arrested
2	7/1/2011	USA	Big-headed Turtle	<i>Platysternon megacephalum</i>	total of 55	Los Angeles International Airport Two Japanese males (39/49) / arrested
			Indian Star Tortoise	<i>Geochelone elegans</i>		
3	May 2015	Japan	Japanese Pond Turtle*	<i>Mauremys japonica</i>	total of 391	Chubu International Airport / luggage Two Chinese nationals / ended in no charge
			Asian Brown Pond Turtle	<i>Mauremys mutica</i>		
4	10/8/2015	Hong Kong	Turtles	Testudines	95	Hong Kong International Airport / five air parcels unknown
5	November 2015	Belgium	Ryukyu Spiny Newt	<i>Echinotriton andersoni</i>	10	Belgium Customs / parcel unknown
6	October 2018	Hong Kong	Ryukyu Black-breasted Leaf Turtle	<i>Geoemyda japonica</i>	60	Hong Kong International Airport / luggage Japanese male (43) / prosecuted in Hong Kong SAR, sentenced to one-year imprisonment
7	24/5/2019	mainland China	Atlas Beetle	<i>Chalcosoma atlas</i>	total of 7	Chengdu Customs / parcel unknown
			-	<i>Allotopus rosenbergi</i>		
8	1/7/2019	Thailand	Japanese Rhinoceros Beetle	<i>Trypoxylus dichotomus</i>	100	Don Mueang International Airport / luggage Japanese man (44) / arrested
			Stag beetles	Lucanidae	20	

¹⁴ References: case 1; Los Angeles Times 2011/8/1 "Japanese man pleads guilty to smuggling exotic turtles into LAX". 読売新聞 2011/6/6「希少カメ 売買横行」. 2; The United States Attorney's Office Central District of California (press release) 2011/1/10 "Japanese nationals arrested on charges of smuggling turtles and tortoises from Japan into the united states", Los Angeles Times 2011/1/11 "Exotic turtles seized at LAX in smuggling arrest" <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2011-jan-11-la-me-0111-turtle-smuggle-20110111-story.html> . 3; 朝日新聞2015/5/25「スーツケースにカメ400匹 絶滅危惧、密輸未遂の疑い」、中日新聞2015/5/25「密輸?カメ400匹押収 中部空港 男女が出国試みる」. 4; Government of Hong Kong (press release) 2015/8/10 "Hong Kong Customs seized turtles at airport (with photo)" <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201508/10/P201508100800.htm> . 5; 沖縄タイムス 2016/7/15 "密輸された天然記念物のイモリ、ベルギーから沖縄に戻る" <https://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/articles/-/54358> . 6; NHK NEWS WEB 2018/12/7「沖縄にだけ生息の希少カメ 香港に大量密輸」、朝日新聞2019/5/7「手荷物にカメ60匹 「密輸中継地」で日本人に実刑判決」<https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASM573SMYM57UHBI01G.html> . 7; AFP BB NEWS 2019/5/24「国際郵便物の中から生きているカブトムシ 発送元は日本、成都税関で発見」 <https://www.afpb.com/articles/-/3226469> . 8; 産経新聞 2019/7/3「カブトムシ密輸の男逮捕 タイの空港、繁殖目的か」 <https://www.sankei.com/world/news/190703/wor1907030020-n1.html> .

A blue-tinted photograph of a terrarium. Inside, a lizard is visible on the left, and a large, rectangular cork log is on the right. The substrate consists of wood chips. The background shows some blurred objects, possibly other terrariums or supplies.

DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION

JAPAN CUSTOMS SEIZURES

CUSTOM'S SEIZURE DATA AND IMPLICATIONS: LOW RATE OF DETECTION

Seventy-eight incoming seizures involving 1,161 specimens of CITES-listed species used as exotic pets were reported by Japan Customs between 2007–2018, with no more than 10 seizures made annually since 2008. Interpretation of seizure incidents is often complicated due to unknown levels of underlying trafficking and variability of law enforcement effort. However, the number of seizures made by Japan Customs likely indicates a low detection rate for a major end-consumer market, bearing in mind that Japan makes public all of its CITES seizures. For a rough comparison of magnitude, Japan's reported CITES imports of live animals totalled at least 15% (for reptiles, and higher in other taxa) that of the USA (CITES Trade Dashboard: 2013–2017; all purposes), which is one of the largest markets for exotic pets. However, the number of seized specimens tallied in this study of Japan measures only 2% of the comparable amount reported by the USA in the same period (CITES Trade Database¹⁵). Although factors other than law enforcement effort might contribute to the difference, it is worth noting that Japan's effort in making seizures is not considered very high in the context of other CITES commodities such as ivory (Kitade and Nishino, 2017; Milliken *et al.*, 2016).

SCALE OF SEIZURES AND VALUE: PROFITS GENERATED FROM LAUNDERING IN JAPAN'S LEGAL MARKET

Small-scale seizures involving no more than five specimens comprised a majority (54%) of seizures made by Japan Customs, which is relatively small

compared to that of large-scale seizures made in other Asian countries/territories such as mainland China and Hong Kong where consignments often contain live animals numbering well over a hundred or even a thousand (Utermohlen and Baine, 2018). However, each seizure still carried significant financial value with an average estimated retail price of JPY 1.5–3.6 million (USD14,000–33,000).

The total estimated legal market¹⁶ value of specimens seized by Japan Customs between 2014–2018 reached JPY54.1–125.6 million (USD492,000–1.1 million). While the lack of reliable estimates of the size of the domestic market prohibits any meaningful comparison in financial terms, the fact that corresponding legal retail prices were found for all of the identified species in the seizure data highlights the importance of Japan's legal domestic market. Given the seizures are underrepresenting the actual trafficking through Japan's borders, the monetary estimate of specimens seized by Japan Customs likely represents a small portion of criminal proceeds generated by laundering of trafficked exotic pets into Japan's domestic market.

TRAFFICKING PATTERNS

JAPAN AS AN IMPORTER COUNTRY: GLOBAL FOOTPRINT AND PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Japan Customs seizure data combined with the review of media reports overseas illustrate Japan's role as the destination country for a diverse array of wildlife. Of the 1,161 specimens seized by Japan Customs between 2007–2018, Appendix II-listed species comprised 91%, followed by 5% Appendix I-listed and 3% Appendix III-listed species. Reptiles were the majority comprising 71%, followed by 19% mammals and 6% birds. Thirteen countries/territories identified as direct exporters were

¹⁵ The US reports confiscations and seizures using source code "I". 922 records involving 52,164 specimens of live mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, arthropods and arachnids for all purposes were reported by US for the period 2007–2018.

¹⁶ Although the specimens were illegally sourced and trafficked, if they had not been seized by Customs and therefore passed the border undetected, there remains a largely unregulated domestic market in Japan where they are able to be traded legally.

distributed across Southeast Asia (55%) and East Asia (36%). While data are far from complete, media reports on seizures overseas identified at least 28 incidents involving 1,207 specimens, which revealed the extent of smuggling by Japanese nationals in locations not implicated by Japan Customs' seizures (e.g. Australia, South Africa, South America) and involvement of non-CITES listed species in large numbers (e.g. Australian endemic reptiles, and South American beetles). The exploitation of non-CITES listed species which are already protected in their range countries raises the alarm that regulation by CITES may be needed to stem international trafficking.

Apart from the obvious conservation and socio-economic impacts in the affected countries, the trafficking of exotic pets poses serious public health concerns for potential transmission of zoonotic diseases. Our review identified seizures of 185 specimens of primates and 10 specimens of bats whose import is strictly prohibited by the Infectious Disease Control Law. These animals are known to be potential reservoirs or intermediaries for viruses that can cause human disease outbreaks including Ebola Virus Disease (bats and primates) as well as SARS, MERS, and the most recent Covid-19 (probably bats) (Andersen *et al.*, 2020; WHO, 2019, 2020a, 2020b). Trafficking of these and other species that can transmit a wide range of zoonotic diseases urgently calls for public attention and possibly new regulatory needs for exotic pet trade in Japan and other countries.

TRAFFICKING ROUTES:

KEY ASIAN HUBS—THAILAND, HONG KONG, AND MAINLAND CHINA

While Japan Customs data only describe countries/territories where contraband was shipped from, certain key exporters to Japan, particularly Thailand, mainland China and Hong Kong, are well-known trade hubs for various wildlife products including live animals (OECD, 2019; Phassaraudomsak and Krishnasamy, 2018). In Japan Customs' seizure data, Thailand appeared as the major exporter of both mammals and birds, with all but one identified species being non-native to Thailand, including those endemic to South America and Africa. Mainland China and Hong Kong are known hubs for receiving trafficked tortoises and freshwater turtles

from other regions (Inglis *et al.*, 2018; Utermohlen and Baine, 2018). In fact, Hong Kong's role was highlighted in a recent media release by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police (November 2019) regarding the seizure of two Perentie *Varanus giganteus*, an Australian endemic, shipped from Hong Kong in 2017 and 2018 (Nippon TV, 2019). TRAFFIC analysis of Japan's data indicates that direct sourcing from range countries to Japan is also likely occurring, including reptiles from Indonesia, Australia and South Africa.

MODE OF TRANSPORT:

PASSENGER AIRLINES THROUGH KEY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS

Japan Customs data on incoming seizures revealed 65% were made on items transported via passenger airlines (airline passengers' belongings/luggage), followed by international mail 24%, commercial air cargo 8%, and cruise ships 3%. In terms of locations, seizures were concentrated in key international airports and postal centres from large urban areas (i.e. the Greater Tokyo Area and Osaka). As an island nation, it is plausible that passenger airlines are the most preferred method for smuggling live animals, particularly for warm-blooded mammals and birds, based on corresponding seizure data). Seizures from airline cargo were much less frequent and involved fish and amphibians. The frequency of seizures at international airports appears simply to mirror the volume of throughputs: Narita International Airport is Japan's busiest airport with over 33 million people and 2 million tonnes of freight arriving and departing with international lines in 2018—unsurprisingly it recorded the highest number of exotic pet seizures. Next in terms of frequency was Kansai International Airport (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT, 2020b)) with the second highest seizures of exotic pets. As is usually the case, the overwhelming volume of traffic at these international transport hubs is likely making them targeted entry points for smuggling. While seizures at other airports have been limited, risk assessment is warranted given the tripling of international visitors to local airports between 2012–2017 and the government's policy to invite more new international flights into these locations (MLIT, 2017). Similarly, limited seizures so far from air cargo may indicate the need for a targeted

review to understand better detection efforts and capacity of air cargo screening procedures and other security measures.

MODE OF TRANSPORT:

CRUISE SHIPS CONNECTING TO EAST ASIA AND INTERNATIONAL MAILS

The only seizure identified to be associated with maritime transport was the smuggling of reptiles by Chinese nationals on a cruise ship reported by Japan Customs in Okinawa, the southernmost prefecture of Japan. Although maritime transport in general may be unsuitable for live animals due to the prolonged travel time, cruise ships connecting nearby Asian countries may be presenting an emerging opportunity as the number of such vessels entering Japanese ports has nearly tripled between 2013–2018, especially with services connecting southwestern Japan to East Asia (MLIT, 2020a). In fact, multiple accounts of smuggling of gold and drugs from East Asia, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China, intercepted from cruise ships have been recorded in recent years (Japan Customs, 2017, 2018).

Finally, seizures in international mail, which was second to passenger airlines, involved reptiles, arachnids and insects. While international mail is delivered via both air and maritime transport services, use of express mail providers such as EMS may be more prone to exploitation for smuggling live animals, which could then suggest that couriers and logistics services (currently categorised under air cargo by Japan Customs) may also be at risk for trafficking of these taxa.

UNDERREPRESENTED TAXA:

AMPHIBIANS, FISH, INSECTS AND ARACHNIDS

Seizures of other taxa, namely arachnids, amphibians, insects and fish were rarely recorded at Japanese border checkpoints. However, seizure reports from overseas highlighted at least two large volume seizures of beetles in South America, suggesting that insects are being trafficked to Japan and may simply be not as effectively intercepted.

A recent report also suggests insects are being targeted by smugglers to meet the market demand in Japan (Actman, 2019b; Berton, 2020). While less information is available on trafficking of amphibians and fish, the Japanese domestic market for these taxa remains active, highlighting the need for assessments of trade patterns and domestic sales to detect species or countries that are likely affected by illegal and/or unsustainable trade.

JAPAN AS SOURCE/TRANSIT COUNTRY:

EXPLOITATION OF JAPANESE ENDEMIC SPECIES

Records of illegal exports of exotic pets from Japan were limited, but underscored Japan's other role as a source or transit country in the global exotic pet market. In particular, concerning cases regarding exploitation of Japanese endemic species were detected, with the earliest media reports of seizures in 2015.

The targeted reptiles and amphibians were mostly endemic to the Nansei Islands of Japan; TRAFFIC's previous research highlighted active international trading of species that are protected nationally or by local ordinances, and recommended stronger protections including CITES Appendix III listings (Janssen and Shepherd, 2019; Wakao, 2018). Reports of illegal export of native beetles were also found for the first time in 2019, which indicates better monitoring of trade in these previously unstudied species may be needed.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CHALLENGES

DETECTION AT BORDERS:

CO-OPERATION REQUIRED FOR EFFICIENT DETECTION

Inevitably Customs are unable to stop all contraband, and the task is only becoming more challenging for Japan Customs. The agency's resources are already stretched to deal with a more than ten-fold growth in the number of foreign visitors and a five-fold increase in the number of import/export declarations over the past three decades (Japan Customs, 2019).

Notwithstanding the limited number of seizures, trafficking of exotic pets could be on the rise considering the increased popularity of exotic pets such as reptiles in the domestic market (Wakao *et al.*, 2018). A dedicated capacity assessment of Japan Customs coupled with sufficient resource deployment should be considered to address any current gaps in human, financial and technical resources. New measures should aim towards more efficient and targeted detection by capitalising on existing capacities and enabling techniques. In particular, international law enforcement co-operation in the Asian region as well as participation of civil society including NGOs and the transport sector to monitor and report suspicious trafficking activities are strongly encouraged. Examples of regional co-operation include Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange (TWIX) systems developed for the EU and replicated in African regions (TRAFFIC, 2020). Engagement of the transport sector, participation from which is already proliferating through global initiatives such as the Buckingham Palace Declaration and the ROUTES Partnership, while also emerging in the Japanese aviation sector (TRAFFIC, 2019a), is further encouraged.

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION AND CHARGES BY CUSTOMS AND POLICE: INCREASED EFFORT OVER THE DECADE

Although limited information was available to assess the effectiveness of criminal investigations, a total of at least 12 incidents with suspects charged by customs and/or police were identified since 2007, eight of which were on recent incidents since 2017. The fact that eight of the 12 cases resulted from Japan Customs investigations of seizures demonstrates a sign of improvement in treating smuggling of exotic pets as a more serious offence. A violation of the Customs Act is often dealt with as an administrative disposition instead of criminal charges. This more recent shift in the application of customs penalties was likely facilitated by the rise in social awareness as well as the efforts of police in investigating and charging suspects after they have successfully smuggled contraband past the border, which likely urged offences detected at the border by Japan Customs officials to be treated with similar gravity. Another example is the increase in successful charges and prosecutions in cases

involving Appendix II species, which used to be treated as a much lighter offence. Up until the 2000s seizures were hardly ever investigated as criminal cases (Mr. Masayuki Sakamoto, pers comm., 13th March, 2020).

However, overall there are still a limited number of known cases charged as criminal cases in Japan's justice system over the study period, and the lack of access to information prevented further assessment. Other aspects which require attention in the future include the level of fines imposed through customs administrative disposition (up to 17 such cases during 2014–2018) to gauge whether they are commensurate to the gravity of the offence and financial profits. Challenges faced by the police in investigating and charging committed smuggling cases also requires close attention, as the police are key to bringing justice to crimes which are not detected at the border.

INVESTIGATION CHALLENGES: INTERNATIONAL MAIL AS A LOOPHOLE

One specific challenge pertains to trafficking by international mail where offenders are not easily identified. In fact, our review of seizures has shown that none of the known cases trafficked by international mail was criminally charged despite being the second most frequent mode of transport identified. Two such seizures involved 26 monitor lizards with an estimated value of JPY3.1 million (USD28,558), which ended only in confiscation. Furthermore, the Customs Act exempts international mail with contents under a certain value from import/export declaration, meaning that such contraband packages cannot be seized as a violation of the Customs Act. This loophole must be overcome by more dedicated investigation to make a case for violation of other relevant legislations (Chief Inspector Fukuhara, Tokyo Metropolitan Police, pers. comm. 23rd October, 2019). Another common challenge for customs is the inability to make species identification rapidly, particularly an issue for time sensitive cases where the perpetrators are foreign visitors.

INVESTIGATION CHALLENGES: TACKLING CRIMINAL NETWORKS

Identifying and charging other actors involved in

smuggling is another area for improvement as so far it is often the smugglers who are charged with violations of the Customs Act for unauthorised import. Review of cases overseas, however, suggests potential links to organised criminal networks including recent arrests of young Japanese females in Thailand and Australia, who were alleged to have become involved in smuggling operations under the guise of “part-time work” offered by underground organisation(s) (Nikkan Cyzo, 2017; Sueie, 2019). Furthermore, domestic police investigation of otter smuggling in 2018 revealed a smuggler was in contact with a member of an organised criminal network engaged in swindling activities, although the network has not yet been brought to criminal justice. Addressing these crimes requires another level of co-ordinated investigation, for example using “follow-the-money” techniques, and application of different pieces of legislation/regulations, including the Act on Punishment of Organized Crimes and Control of Crime Proceeds as appropriate.

JUDICIAL RESPONSES:

SENTENCING INSUFFICIENT AS A DETERRENT

Although information on judicial outcomes was not easily accessible, the conviction rate was high with all 14 defendants in ten cases with known outcomes found to be convicted. However, the fact that at least four defendants had previous records of being prosecuted/convicted for smuggling exotic pets in either Japan or other countries shows how the overall law enforcement is not working as a deterrent. For one, sentencing did appear insufficient. Of the 14 defendants, only three were sentenced without suspension of sentence for imprisonment of up to one year and 10 months in combination with a fine of up to JPY800,000 (USD7,280). Eight defendants received fines of about JPY478,000 (USD4,348) on average. While appropriate sentencing is guided by the penal code within a maximum penalty, there seems to be room for better reflecting the underlying socio-economic as well as potential public health implications of wildlife trafficking into aggravating circumstances given that limited knowledge about wildlife crime within the judicial sector is a common issue in Japan (Dr. Yoshihiro Tanaka, University of

Niigata, pers. comm. 29th October, 2019). Sensitisation of judicial personnel therefore is recommended and can draw from examples in other countries (e.g. (TRAFFIC, 2019b, 2019c; United States Department of Justice, 2015)). On the legal side, the revised Customs Act (2018) presents an opportunity for stronger sentencing by potentially allowing financial value of the contraband to be better reflected in concomitant penalties.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND DOMESTIC MARKET:

LAUNDERING MUST BE STOPPED

Law enforcement efforts to tackle smuggling are impeded by Japan’s domestic exotic pet market which allows for easy laundering of smuggled specimens with small legal consequences. The current legal framework governing the domestic market does not allow the legality of specimens found inside the border to be questioned (except for those listed in CITES Appendix I protected by LCES), unless direct evidence is available to establish the original smuggling incident. While there were at least four such successful police investigations leading to prosecutions, this is still very challenging, especially for species with past records of legal imports or domestic captive breeding. Neither does the AWMA, another law regulating animal handling businesses, provide any effective means to establish legality or traceability of endangered species sourced or traded by businesses. A thorough review of the legal framework is warranted to explore ways to close loopholes and boost deterrents to illegal activity. Similarly, the exotic pet industry and other relevant sectors including veterinary practitioners and companies dealing in exotic pet products and insurance should introduce voluntary measures to prevent and eliminate smuggling and laundering of exotic pets effectively.

CONCLUSION

品名	ドジ 1177X
規格	2.5
数量	2019
単位	個
価格	¥ 9,800-

品名	エビ 1177X
規格	2.5
数量	2019
単位	個
価格	¥ 6,800-

品名	707X 1177X
規格	70
数量	2019
単位	個
価格	¥ 19,800-

CONCLUSION

AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the limitations of data and information access, the findings of the current assessment have brought some important elements to the surface. Firstly, the seizure analysis highlighted the Asia region as an important hub for the exotic pet trade, thus underscoring the critical need for inter-governmental co-operation to crackdown on trans-boundary trafficking operations effectively. Wider co-ordination, capacity building and awareness-raising of exotic pet trafficking is also warranted for Japan's law enforcement agencies

including the judicial sector; such effort needs to be led by national-level commitment and supported by cross-sectoral co-operation with the private sector (e.g. transport, online companies and exotic pet dealers) as well as wider civil society, including NGOs. Finally, addressing the issue of laundering trafficked specimens into the domestic market would be pivotal to tackling smuggling of exotic pets.

TRAFFIC, therefore, recommends the following:

1

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR:

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT CO-OPERATION

Law enforcement agencies in Japan and other jurisdictions affected by transnational exotic pet trafficking, particularly those in Asia are strongly advised to:

- ✓ **Strengthen international enforcement co-operation** to combat exotic pet trafficking by developing new or building on existing bilateral or multilateral frameworks.
- ✓ Consider **developing a tool in Asia similar to the Trade in Wildlife Information eXchanges (TWIXs)** developed in the EU and African regions to facilitate information exchange and co-operation.

2

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR:

NATIONAL-LEVEL LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Japanese government is strongly advised to:

- ✓ **Develop interagency enforcement co-operation** through reviews, capacity assessment, dialogues, joint trainings, and establish a taskforce to design and implement a national action plan for combatting wildlife crime, including exotic pet trafficking.
- ✓ **Mobilise civil society** including experts, NGOs, and relevant business sectors (e.g. transport, finance, online as well as wildlife-related companies) through formal collaboration to support law enforcement agencies' efforts in detection, species identification, investigation, and prosecution of wildlife trafficking cases.
- ✓ Based on capacity assessment, **allocate sufficient human and financial resources** to enforcement agencies to provide greater capacity for criminal justice responses to wildlife trafficking both at the national level and through international co-operation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR:

NATIONAL-LEVEL LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Japanese law enforcement agencies (Customs and Police) are strongly advised to:

- ✓ **Conduct further staff training to raise their awareness** and ability to detect and investigate wildlife trafficking, including dialogues and joint training between agencies to enhance the level of co-operation;
- ✓ **Conduct a Customs capacity assessment** with an emphasis on high-risk locations as well as transportation methods where capacity is currently deemed low and tactically employing new resources and detection techniques;
- ✓ Establish measures to **tackle trafficking via the international mail** where a loophole in the Customs Act hinders criminal justice responses (e.g. by applying other legislations);
- ✓ Increase efforts to **clamp down on criminal networks involved in trafficking of exotic pets** and other wildlife by maximising the use of approaches such as profiling and intelligence-led surveillance, financial investigation and, if applicable, bringing charges for seizure of criminal assets;
- ✓ **Make information on all criminal charges resulting from violation of CITES regulations available** to the public to allow tracking of trafficking trends and court outcomes.

The Japanese Judiciary sector is strongly advised to:

- ✓ **Consider suitable methods (e.g. through formal training)** to sensitise prosecutors, judges, and citizen judges (in Japan this is similar to a jury) to the significance and impact of wildlife trafficking;
- ✓ **Make information on concluded criminal court cases easily accessible** to the public as granted by the law, to facilitate assessments of judicial responses to wildlife criminal cases and to increase deterrents to illegal behaviour by publicising law enforcement actions.

3

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR:

CITES AND NATIONAL LEGISLATION

The Japanese government and law makers are strongly advised to:

- ✓ Review the current legal framework, including the level of penalties, of CITES-implementing and other legislation relevant to wildlife trafficking and consider possible measures to **increase the level of deterrent**;
- ✓ Review the current legal framework of domestic market regulations, including Law for the

Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (LCES) and Act on Welfare and Management of Animals (AWMA), and consider effective measures to **prevent laundering of illegally obtained specimens into the domestic market**;

- ✓ Review and strengthen the current regulations for the control of import/export as well as domestic sales of live animals in order to **mitigate the risk of transmission of zoonotic diseases**;
- ✓ **Urgently provide sufficient legal protection to endangered native species** that are impacted by exotic pet trafficking through listings in CITES, LCES and local ordinances as appropriate.

The governments of range states of nationally protected species affected by exotic pet trafficking should;

- ✓ Consider urgently listing affected species in CITES Appendix III to enable law enforcement actions at the borders of importing countries such as Japan.

4

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: CIVIL SOCIETY

International and Japanese NGOs should:

- ✓ **Support effective law enforcement** through: 1) facilitating international/interagency co-operation; 2) providing technical assistance through training, tools, and information sharing; 3) mobilising the public and the private sector; 4) and monitoring and reporting wildlife trafficking;
- ✓ **Conduct court-case monitoring of enforcement and judicial responses** to wildlife criminal cases in order to facilitate the assessment of judicial capacity and the level of deterrent penalties;
- ✓ **Undertake continued trade and market monitoring** to keep abreast of emerging trade patterns and novel segments of demand for pets, including lesser known taxa, locations, routes, and methods that are possibly underrepresented in known seizure reports.

The Japanese exotic pet industry and relevant stakeholders (including veterinary practitioners as well as companies dealing in exotic pet products and insurance) should:

- ✓ **Introduce zero tolerance policy against smuggling** through: 1) establishing mechanisms for ensuring traceability and legal origin of animals for sale; and 2) restricting access to markets and services by offenders and businesses who have committed wildlife crime;
- ✓ **Actively report suspicious activities** to law enforcement agencies in order to support effective investigations.

The transport (airline, maritime, and logistics companies) sector is strongly advised to:

- ✓ Introduce wildlife trafficking counter measures into company and industry policies, guidance and best practices, including methods for confidential reporting and collaboration with local law enforcement;
- ✓ Conduct awareness-raising and role-specific training (e.g. through the ROUTES Partnership*) to equip staff with necessary knowledge and skills to detect and report wildlife trafficking to law enforcement agencies and incorporate a module into existing training programmes;

***About the ROUTES Partnership**

The USAID Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species (ROUTES) Partnership brings together transport and logistics companies, government agencies, development groups, law enforcement, conservation organisations and donors to disrupt wildlife trafficking activities, and forms a key element of the concerted international response to addressing wildlife poaching and associated criminal activities worldwide. Further information and resources can be found at www.routespartnership.org.

ANNEXES

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APPENDIX 1

List of 44 species identified for 510 specimens seized during the period 2007–2018 at Japan Customs branches.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	CITES APPENDIX*	NO. OF SPECIMENS	MINIMUM VALUE (JPY)	MAXIMUM VALUE (JPY)
REPTILES					
Chinese Crocodile Lizard	<i>Shinisaurus crocodilurus</i>	I,II	134	54,000	128,000
Four-eyed Turtle	<i>Sacalia quadriocellata</i>	II,III	38	26,800	95,000
Dwarf Sand Boa	<i>Eryx miliaris</i>	II	30	-	-
South Asian Box Turtle	<i>Cuora amboinensis</i>	II	21	12,000	28,000
Pig-nosed Turtle	<i>Carettochelys insculpta</i>	II	18	19,800	398,000
Keel-backed Turtle	<i>Cuora mouhotii</i>	II	17	50,000	140,000
Yellow Pond Turtle	<i>Mauremys mutica</i>	II	15	3,218	9,800
Black-breasted Leaf Turtle	<i>Geoemyda spengleri</i>	II	9	19,900	55,000
Arakan Forest Turtle	<i>Heosemys depressa</i>	II	8	98,000	398,000
Beale's Eyed Turtle	<i>Sacalia bealei</i>	II, III	7	-	-
Green Tree Python	<i>Morelia viridis</i>	II	7	18,000	69,800
Common Box Turtle	<i>Terrapene carolina</i>	II	6	48,000	130,000
Black Spotted Turtle	<i>Geoclemys hamiltonii</i>	I	6	69,800	328,000
Reeves' Turtle	<i>Mauremys reevesii</i>	III	6	1,000	2,800
Banggai Island monitor	<i>Varanus melinus</i>	II	6	44,800	128,000
Yellow-headed Temple Turtle	<i>Heosemys annandalii</i>	II	6	9,800	38,000
Indian Star Tortoise	<i>Geochelone elegans</i>	II	5	-	-
Blue Speckled Tree Monitor	<i>Varanus macraei</i>	II	4	94,500	198,000
African Spurred Tortoise	<i>Geochelone sulcata</i>	II	4	14,000	98,000
Emerald Monitor	<i>Varanus prasinus</i>	II	3	49,800	105,840
Radiated Tortoise	<i>Astrochelys radiata</i>	I	3	598,000	2,800,000
Spotted Tree Monitor	<i>Varanus timorensis</i>	II	2	19,800	22,800
Chinese Box Turtle	<i>Cuora flavomarginata</i>	II	2	19,800	100,000
Common Green Iguana	<i>Iguana iguana</i>	II	2	-	-
Biak Emerald Monitor	<i>Varanus kordensis</i>	II	2	49,800	118,000
Chinese Three-striped Box Turtle	<i>Cuora trifasciata</i>	II	1	289,000	328,000
Impressed Tortoise	<i>Manouria impressa</i>	II	1	-	-

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	CITES APPENDIX*	NO. OF SPECIMENS	MINIMUM VALUE (JPY)	MAXIMUM VALUE (JPY)
MAMMALS					
Pygmy Slow Loris	<i>Nycticebus pygmaeus</i>	I, II	94	680,000	1,100,000
Small-clawed Otter	<i>Aonyx cinereus</i>	II	12	800,000	1,620,000
Common Marmoset	<i>Callithrix jacchus</i>	II	6	298,000	398,000
Sunda Slow Loris	<i>Nycticebus coucang</i>	I	4	680,000	1,800,000
Cotton-top Tamarin	<i>Saguinus oedipus</i>	I	1	1,800,000	2,500,000
Pygmy Marmoset	<i>Callithrix pygmaea</i>	II	1	780,000	980,000
Fennec Fox	<i>Vulpes zerda</i>	II	1	-	-
Binturong	<i>Arctictis binturong</i>	II	1	1,200,000	200,0000
Negro Tamarin	<i>Saguinus midas</i>	II	1	598,000	1,000,000
BIRDS					
Spotted Little Owl	<i>Athene brama</i>	II	12	220,000	320,000
Collared Scops-owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>	II	2	99,800	320,000
Asian Barred Owlet	<i>Glaucidium cuculoides</i>	II	2	198,000	300,000
Sunda Hawk-eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>	II	1	1,980,000	1,980,000
Brown Wood-owl	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>	II	1	200,000	680,000
INSECTS					
Satanas Beetle	<i>Dynastes satanas</i>	II	4	11,800	49,000
AMPHIBIANS					
Axolotl	<i>Ambystoma mexicanum</i>	II	2	2,074	2,800
FISH					
Asian Arowana	<i>Scleropages formosus</i>	I	2	-	-

* Note that some species were listed in different CITES Appendices during the survey period. Minimum and maximum value of the species were checked for those seized during 2014–2018 (unit= JPY).

APPENDIX 2

Seizures of exotic pets with implication of Japan's involvement reported outside of Japan during the period 2007–2019 August. *Source; media reports.*

NO ¹⁷	DATE OF INCIDENT	PLACE OF SEIZURE	SPECIES INVOLVED			PLACE OF SEIZURE -> INTENDED DESTINATION SUSPECT / OUTCOME
			COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	QUANTITY	
1	24/02/2007	Thailand	Slow loris	<i>Nycticebus spp.</i>	23	Suvarnabhumi Airport -> Narita International Airport Japanese male / eluded arrest
2	15/02/2008	Argentina	Rhinoceros beetle	Dynastinae	approximately 100	Buenos Aires International Airport -> Tokyo Japanese male beetle shop owner (41), an Argentine couple / prosecuted
3	19/09/2008	Australia	Lizard	Squamata	2	Fremantle Harbour Three Japanese males (29/37/43) / arrested
4	01/09/2009	Australia	Shingleback Skink	<i>Tiliqua rugosa</i>	14	Perth International Airport -> Singapore A Japanese man (34) / prosecuted
5	02/10/2009	Indonesia	Javan Hawk-eagle	<i>Nisaetus bartelsi</i>	1	Ngurah Rai International Airport 4 suspects including two Japanese men (33/36) / arrested
			Hawk and others	Accipitridae	15	
6	22/10/2012	Australia	Shingleback Skink	<i>Tiliqua rugosa</i>	9	Perth International Airport A Japanese man (36) / convicted (6-month imprisonment and fine of AUD3000)
7	22/01/2013	Thailand	Asian Small Clawed Otter	<i>Aonyx cinerea</i>	5	Suvarnabhumi International Airport Japanese / eluded arrest
			Smooth-coated Otter	<i>Lutrogale perspicillata</i>	6	
8	03/10/2013	Australia	Shingleback Skink	<i>Tiliqua rugosa</i>	28	Perth International Airport Two Japanese men (33/38) / Convicted (6 months suspended sentence / 7 - 12 months imprisonment)
			Bearded dragon	<i>Pogona spp.</i>	1	
			Lizard	<i>Squamata</i>	1	
9	20/02/2015	Thailand	Pig-nosed Turtle	<i>Carettochelys insculpta</i>	110	Suvarnabhumi International Airport -> Nagoya, Japan Two Japanese men (39/39) / arrested
			Woodchuck	<i>Marmota monax</i>	4	
			Snake	Serpentes	21	
			Gecko	Gekkota	9	
10	20/06/2015	India	Snake	Serpentes	unknown	Cochin International Airport Two Japanese nationals (21/24) / convicted (1-year imprisonment and fine of 45,000 rupees each)
			Turtle	Testudines		
			Scorpion	Scorpiones		
			Chameleon	Chamaeleonidae		
			Arachnid	Arachnida		
			Beetle	Coleoptera		
			Centipede	Chilopoda		

	DATE OF INCIDENT	PLACE OF SEIZURE	SPECIES INVOLVED			PLACE OF SEIZURE -> INTENDED DESTINATION SUSPECT / OUTCOME
			COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	QUANTITY	
11	28/01/2016	Philippines	Tarsier	Tarsiidae	11	Ninoy Aquino International Airport -> Japan (via international mail) Filipino airport screener / charged (suspicion of facilitating the shipment by issuing documents to ship the animals to a Japanese)
			Monitor Lizard	<i>Varanidae spp.</i>	11	
			Sailfin Lizard	<i>Hydrosaurus spp.</i>	8	
			Colubrid Snake	Colubridae	5	
			Water Snake	<i>Homalopsidae spp.</i>	6	
			Scops-owl	<i>Otus spp.</i>	3	
			Eagle owl	<i>Bubo spp.</i>	3	
12	22/11/2016	Thailand	Turtle	Testudines	32	Suvarnabhumi International Airport -> Narita International Airport Japanese female (44) / arrested
			Common Water Monitor	<i>Varanus salvator</i>	8	
			Chinese Crocodile Lizard	<i>Shinisaurus crocodilurus</i>	15	
13	20/01/2017	New Caledonia	Gecko	<i>Gekkota spp.</i>	79	French Southern Territory L'Île des Pins Japan male / convicted (fine of 800,000 francs)
14	26/02/2017	Thailand	Otter	Lutrinae	12	Don Mueang Airport -> Narita International Airport Japanese man (57) / arrested
			Owl	Strigiformes	5	
			Falcon	<i>Falco spp.</i>	3	
15	16/05/2017	Indonesia	Blood Python	<i>Python brongersmai</i>	33	Soekarno-Hatta International Airport -> Haneda International Airport Japanese male / arrested
			Snake	Serpentes	19	
			Green Tree Python	<i>Morelia viridis</i>	3	
			Lizard	<i>Squamata spp.</i>	10	
			Earless Monitor Lizard	<i>Lanthanotus borneensis</i>	4	
			Blue-tongued skink	<i>Tiliqua spp.</i>	42	
			Red-Eyed Crocodile Skinks	<i>Tribolonotus gracilis</i>	65	
			Monitor lizard	<i>Varanidae spp.</i>	69	
			Pig-nosed Turtle	<i>Carettochelys insculpta</i>	1	
16	24/05/2017	Australia	Asian Leaf Turtle	<i>Cyclemys dentata</i>	6	Perth International Airport Japanese male / convicted (fined 10,000 AUD)
			Shingleback Skink	<i>Tiliqua rugosa</i>	13	
17	11/06/2017	Thailand	Asian Small Clawed Otter	<i>Aonyx cinerea</i>	10	Suvarnabhumi International Airport -> Narita International airport Japanese male (42) / arrested
18	07/09/2017	Thailand	Fennec Fox	<i>Vulpes zerda</i>	2	Suvarnabhumi International Airport Japanese male (53) / arrested
			Jumping mice	Dipodidae	4	

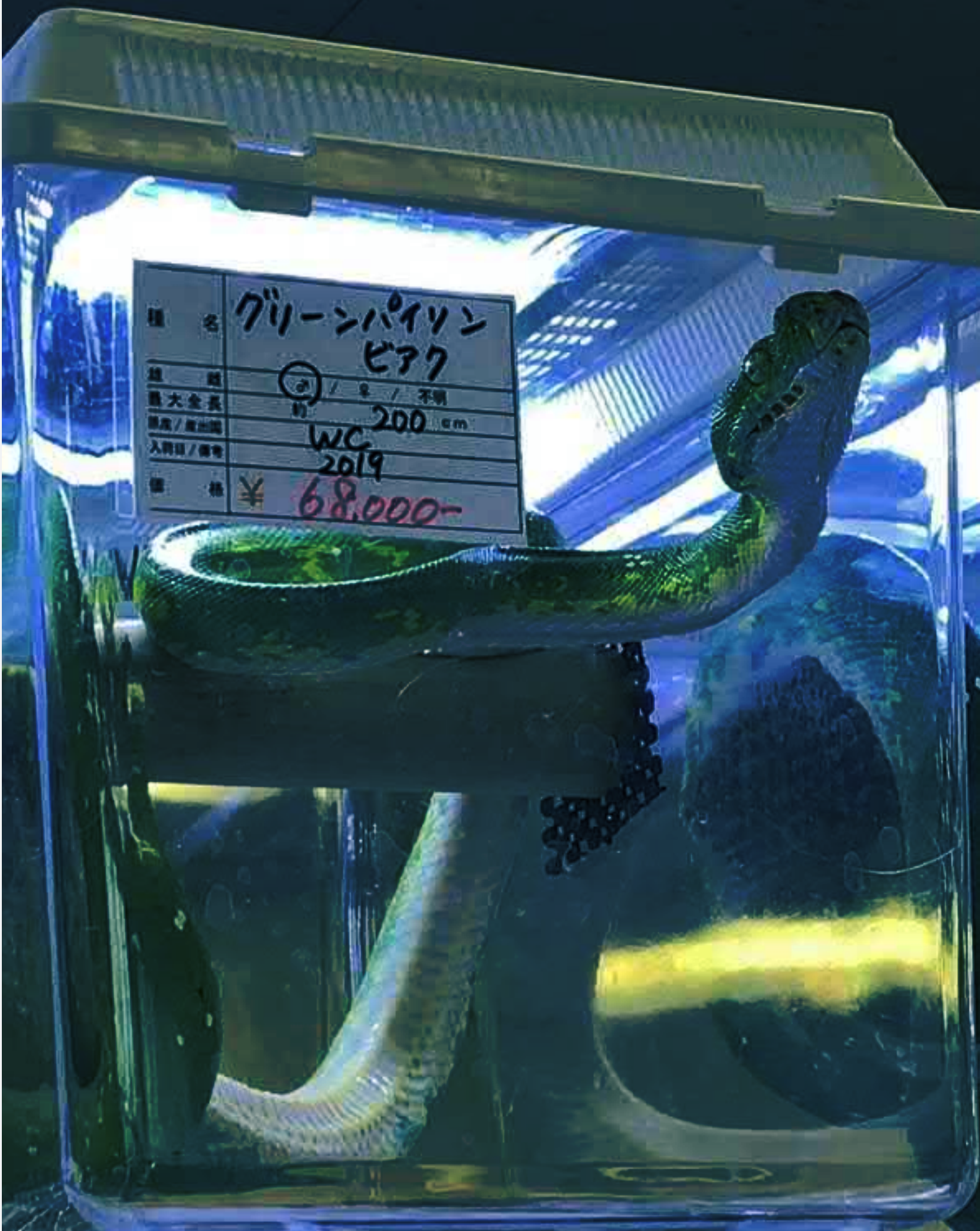
	DATE OF INCIDENT	PLACE OF SEIZURE	SPECIES INVOLVED			PLACE OF SEIZURE -> INTENDED DESTINATION SUSPECT / OUTCOME
			COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	QUANTITY	
19	29/10/2017	Thailand	Otter	Lutrinae	10	Don Mueang Airport -> Narita International Airport Japanese female (22) / arrested
20	24/11/2017	South Africa	Armadillo Gridled Lizard	<i>Ouroborus cataphractus</i>	48	Western Cape Japanese male / convicted (either 13 years imprisonment or fine of 1 million Rand)
21	29/12/2017	South Africa	Armadillo Gridled Lizard	<i>Ouroborus cataphractus</i>	5	Nuwerus, Western Cape Japanese male / convicted (either six-year imprisonment or fine of 300,000 Rand)
22	29/05/2018	Indonesia	Green Tree Python	<i>Morelia viridis</i>	46	Soekarno-Hatta International Airport Japanese male / arrested
			Emerald Monitor	<i>Varanus prasinus</i>	8	
			Blue Speckled Tree Monitor	<i>Varanus macraei</i>	1	
23	14/06/2018	Venezuela	Stag Beetle	Lucanidae	Total of 158 beetles	Simón Bolívar International Airport -> Turkey Japanese male beetle shop owner (47) / arrested
			Rhinoceros Beetle	Dynastinae		
24	18/09/2018	Indonesia	Red-Eyed Crocodile Skinks	<i>Tribolonotus gracilis</i>	Total of 52	Soekarno-Hatta International Airport -> Tokyo Japanese male (77) / arrested
			Blue-tongued Skink	<i>Tiliqua spp.</i>		
			Gecko	<i>Gekkota spp.</i>		
25	08/11/2018	Australia	Shingleback Skink	<i>Tiliqua rugosa</i>	6	Perth International Airport -> Hong Kong SAR Japanese male (45) / convicted (details unknown)
26	05/02/2019	Australia	Shingleback Skink	<i>Tiliqua rugosa</i>	10	Sydney Airport Japanese male (46) / arrested
27	23/04/2019	Australia	Shingleback Skink	<i>Tiliqua rugosa</i>	17	Melbourne Airport Japanese female (27) / convicted (4 months imprisonment)
			Blue-tongued Skink	<i>Tiliqua spp.</i>	2	
28	05/06/2019	Australia	Shingleback Skink	<i>Tiliqua rugosa</i>	13	Perth International Airport -> Singapore/Malaysia Two Japanese males (51/28) / convicted (five months imprisonment)

¹⁷ References: case 1; 東京新聞 28/2/2007「スローロリス密輸をタイ空港で摘発、容疑者の日本人逃走」、2、朝日新聞 22/3/2008「カブトムシ密輸 邦人に密輸未遂容疑」、3、読売新聞 20/9/2008「豪州のトカゲ密輸容疑 名古屋出身の男ら3人逮捕」、4、Customs and Border Protection media release 2/9/2009 "Customs and Border Protection socks it to lizard smuggler". 5、朝日新聞 22/10/2009「希少種の鳥密輸未遂 日本人ら4人逮捕」、ProFauna press release 3/10/2009 "Government of Bali and ProFauna Indonesia Arrested International Wildlife Syndicate". 6、Japan Today 26/10/2012 "Japanese man arrested for attempting to smuggle 9 lizards out of Australia" <https://japantoday.com/category/crime/japanese-man-arrested-for-attempting-to-smuggle-9-lizards-out-of-australia>. 7、IUCN Otter Specialist Group Bulletin 30(1) January 2013 "Seizure of Live Otters in Bangkok Airport, Thailand". 8、Customs and Border Protection joint media release 3/10/2013 "Thirty lizards seized at Perth International Airport", 西日本新聞 3/10/2013「希少トカゲ密輸で邦人逮捕 一匹70万円の価値」、The Australian 3/10/2013 "Japanese men charged for WA lizard smuggling". 9、産経ニュース 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