

CITES news - Prague



Czech Environmental Inspectorate



Anodorhynchus leari

11.6.2010 – Customs officers and wildlife inspectors from CEI seized 18 very rare parrots (Appendix A, CITES I) during several house searches and road checks of cars. The most important is seizure of **3 juvenile indigo macaws (*Anodorhynchus leari*)**, which is **one of the most rare and critically endangered species in the world**. It is estimated that only small remnant population of some 700 individuals remain in the wild in two small areas in Eastern Brazil, there are almost no ones kept in captivity. Indigo macaws are more rare than giant pandas (app. 1500 specimens in the wild), tigers (app. 4000 specimens in the wild) etc. and their value is priceless. Loro Parque Foundation's breeding centre at Tenerife Island is the only one legally breeding *Anodorhynchus leari* specimens in Europe.

This seizure is part of “**Operation Lora**” - long-term investigation realized by Czech customs officers and CEI inspectors, which has been focused on uncovering international gangs of parrot smugglers. Operation Lora has been connected with similar Operation OXOSI co-ordinated by Interpol that took place last year in Brazil. The trafficking is being organized by few Czech nationals, but many other countries are involved in this illegal trade (Brazil, Portugal, Germany, Russia, Ukraine, Netherlands....). The gang is specialized in

smuggling very rare species of macaws, amazons, cockatoos etc. The supposed method is smuggling eggs or hatchings by couriers to Europe and after that reporting of the birds as bred in captivity in EU. Falsified EU certificates, fake rings, duplication of ring numbers and replacement of specimens (using certificates from dead specimens) are being used too.



box with 3 Lear's macaws



feeding of young Lear's macaw during seizure

This latest seizure is in connections with another uncovering of 5 smuggled Palm Cockatoos (*Probosciger aterrimus*) during a road inspection on the D2 motorway near Slovakian borders at 11th May (reported by CITES news n. 66.).

Probosciger aterrimus



The recent realization started in south Moravia and east Bohemia early in the morning of 11th June by home searches and a road check. Four persons were checked and parrots of eight species (*Anodorhynchus leari*, *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*, *Amazona orarix*, *Amazona rhodocorytha*, *Amazona tucumana*, *Ara ambiguus*) worth from hundreds of thousands to millions of Czech crowns were seized during these checks. The indigo macaws were transported from Portugal with forged Dutch CITES certificates for *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus* and were declared as *Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus* juveniles. They were probably collected from nests in the wild and illegally transported to Europe. The birds are around 5 months old and they still need feeding by artificial nutrition. All seized birds were placed to rescue centre. Three persons were

taken into custody, charges will be brought against all of the four involved persons. The investigation is still continuing.



Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus
during seizure



If you want to see some video records from the seizure, look at the web side of CEI:
http://www.cizp.cz/2653_Zadrzeni-vzacnych-papousku

More information:

CITES team
CITES Department
Czech Environmental Inspectorate
Na Brehu 267, 190 00 Prague 9

tel.: 00420 222860307-311
fax: 00420 222860227
cites@cizp.cz
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