

SMUGGLING OF EXOTIC ANIMALS

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In today`s world the smuggling of exotic animals is one of the most pressing problems. Every year the number of endangered animals steadily grows. Some of them are simply few in numbers, some are threatened by changing environment. In most cases animal extinction, as well as other natural calamities, is a result of human actions. Many people want to make big money selling rare animals on the black market. All over the world there is a register of endangered animals, because the Customs Service carefully monitor the smuggling of animals. At airports customs officers check people and their baggage using high – tech equipment: x – ray screening system, metal detectors, flexible fiberscopes, density meters, remote operated cameras, mirror kits, etc. They conduct personal examination and detect smuggling cases. Places of concealment may be different, for example, inside pockets, double (false) bottoms and sides of bags. People found different methods for carrying animals and some of it we will tell you.

The examples below show how resourceful can be smugglers. ‘Everything from caviar-producing sturgeon to sea turtles and Komodo dragons have been confiscated by customs officials. The black market in wildlife is the world's second largest at between £5.2 and £6.6billion - only beaten by drugs smuggling.’[7]

‘Hiding a live monkey underneath your blouse and claiming to be pregnant may sound like amateur hour. But that’s exactly what American Gypsy Lawson, 29, did when she sneaked a drugged rhesus monkey into the US in 2008 - and got away with it. She flew from Thailand to America along with her mother Fran Ogren without raising the suspicion of customs officials. Ogren had even emailed "NE Washington Witches and Pagans" while traveling home to ask for "last-minute energy" to help them safely smuggle the monkey stateside. But both were eventually arrested after Lawson began bragging about her exploits to an assistant in a clothes shop - who promptly alerted the FBI. Lawson was sentenced to 60 days in federal prison and three years probation for her part in the monkey smuggling.’ [4]

‘Another bizarre smuggling attempts was foiled by customs officials when they caught the culprit with his pants down. The evil trader had two live pigeons tucked inside them. The seedy passenger with a funny walk was pecked up in Melbourne after jetting in from Dubai. Initial checks revealed two birds eggs in his luggage. And the pigeons, wrapped in paper tubes, were discovered during a full body search.’ [1]

We believe that people who want to earn a lot of money are ready to transport the most dangerous animals and insects. Many girls and men are afraid of spiders, but in this story the man was the unceasing.

‘Welsh pet shop owner Lee Arden was arrested in Brazil trying to board a plane with two suitcases filled with 1,000 live spiders. The spiders – each of which was in an individual box – were picked up by X-ray scanners and Arden was held on trafficking charges. Police were called in after a machine operator at Rio airport noticed something unusual about two of the passenger's bags. Arden was stopped by federal police officers and agents from the Brazilian Institute for Environment and Renewable Resources. A routine search of his luggage found the spiders – including rare tarantulas – individually packed into boxes in two separate cases.’ [5]

‘Thai smuggler Piyawan Palasarn tried to sneak a three-month old tiger cub in her case - alongside a cuddly tiger toy. The 31-year-old had attempted to smuggle the cub into her home country by drugging it to keep it quiet. Her scam was foiled when staff scanning the checked-in bag noticed that one of the animals appeared to be alive, and the cub was discovered. She denied the luggage with the cub belonged to her and said another passenger had asked her to carry it for them. [2]

Smuggling of exotic animals happens not only abroad. In Russia there are many reserves and forests where animals live, but poachers kidnap them for profit. ‘ Endangered birds worth more than £80,000 were seized by airport security when a man tried to sneak them through in his hand luggage. The five rare Russian saker falcon chicks were found in the smuggler’s two sports bags as he went through customs at Domodedovo Airport in the Russian capital Moscow.’ [6]

When smugglers steal animals and take them away from their natural habits, they don’t think about their lives. Exotic animals often suffer at the hands of dealers who sell them to pet stores and zoos. ‘Most of animals are subjected to crowded living conditions, poor ventilation, and a lack of food, water, and basic care. More than 400 iguanas (half of whom died) had been left in shipping crates for about two weeks without food or water because of a canceled order. Hundreds of dead animals were discovered during the raid, and more than 6,000 died afterward because they were too ill to be saved.’[3]

Therefore, almost all countries view the smuggling of exotic animals and protected wildlife as a threat to the environment and ‘good governance, a threat to the rule of law, and a challenge to our stewardship responsibilities for this good earth.’ [8]

To sum up, we would like underline nowadays rare and exotic animals are at risk of extinction. It is the Customs Service whose main duty is to prevent the traffic of smuggling. .

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