

DENR to charge wildlife traffickers under RA 9147

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Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy A. Cimatu

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it will file charges against four suspects for their alleged involvement in the illegal wildlife trade.

The charges involve alleged violations of Republic Act No. 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

In a statement Thursday, Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said the joint operation between its task force on the illegal wildlife trade and the National Bureau of Investigation's Environmental Crime Division managed to rescue dozens of exotic animals from a Pasay City home.

"This serves both as an accomplishment and warning to those who are thinking [of] doing such [illegal] actions as far as these wild animals are concerned," he added.

On Tuesday, the suspects were found in possession of 110 sugar gliders, a type of possum; 26 Moluccan cockatoos; and seven birds of paradise.

The rescued animals were valued at P10 million.

DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim said that the confiscated wildlife will be quarantined for two months to ensure they are free of disease.

Ms. Lim said the animals could have originated in Australia, Indonesia or Papua New Guinea.

“If it is still possible to repatriate them, we will. But if that is no longer possible, we will see if we can take care of them over the long term and use them for educational purposes,” she added.

The Philippines is a known source and transit point for the wildlife trade. The BMB is currently working on proposed amendments to RA 9147 to give it more teeth. — **Anna Gabriela A. Mogato**

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