

## Japan trade in rare species hit

### No. 2 importer of living tortoises and birds

Kyodo News

Japan is a major importer of rare plants and animals whose international trade is restricted under a convention on endangered species, according to a new report.

The report, prepared by Traffic East Asia-Japan, a group that monitors wildlife trade, was released last week in conjunction with the COP10 international conference on biological diversity being held in Nagoya.



**Rare: Japan is the world's leading importer of the Indian star tortoise, an endangered species whose trade is restricted under the Washington Convention. KYODO PHOTO**

Titled "State of Wildlife Trade in Japan," the report says Japan was the world's No. 2 importer of living tortoises and birds, and No. 3 in importing orchids in 2007.

Noting that Japan is currently hosting the international talks, the report says it aims to foster greater understanding of the country's trade patterns so its wildlife trade economy can be guided toward "one of responsible consumption."

Japan imports more than 1,600 species out of the roughly 5,000 animal species and 28,000 plant species designated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, according to the report.

Import cases are also on the rise, numbering about 50,000 in 2007, nearly five times more than two decades ago, the report says.

The report notes that it has found endangered species imported from Southeast Asia and Ryukyu black-breasted leaf turtles on sale at stores in the Kanto and Chubu regions.

Selling the indigenous turtle is banned here because it is a protected species.

The monitoring group is calling for legislation to toughen rules and penalties on the trade in these animals.

The report also found that Japan was the top importer of Indian star tortoises and Greek spur-thigh tortoises, while it accounted for 12 percent of the world's orchid imports.

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