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142 Sea Turtles Rescued from Illegal Deal, 11 Died

An illegal sea turtle trade spot was pinpointed by local fishery supervisors in a village at Qionghai City, Hainan Province at 11:00 pm, May 4, with 142 green sea turtles (Chelonia mydas, second state-level protected aquatic wild animal) saved, among which 131 were still alive.

This spot is the biggest of its kind ever located out in Hainan Province. To date, most of the captured turtles have been released back to the wild.

On May 4, the general fishery supervision squad from the province received information that showed an illegal sea turtle trade spot in Wenhouzai Village, belonging to the Committee of Dongtang Village, Changpo Town of Qionghai City. More than 20 law enforcers of the squad set off and drove to the spot. At 0:20, May 5, China News Service reporter and the superintendent of the squad also arrived. Piled like small mountains and creating a strong smell, turtles were covered with fences near a bleak suburb family farm. Many were severely hurt on their back and legs, some still energetic and still sprawling. Among the 142 turtles, the biggest weighted 190 kilogram and its shell was one-meter long, some small maybe 40 kilograms. Supervisors held the spot in overnight observation.

Till morning, with the help of the owner of the farm, the turtle dealer was found. After interrogation, Huang, a local boss, confessed that the turtles were purchased from fishermen in Longwan harbor, and he planned to sell them to a sea park in Wanning City as a showcase. He had slaughtered two deadly turtles earlier.

Law enforcers released 63 turtles back to the sea after that. In the afternoon, three experts from the biology department of Hainan Normal University came to the spot to undertake secure treatment of the wounded turtles. In addition, the remaining 68 were put in net boxes in Tanben harbor for the time being, and will be freed when well enough.

The superintendent told the reporter that Huang violated the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Wildlife by purchasing and selling a large number of state-level protected wild aquatic animals, and is required to be assessed by the law.

(China.org.cn, translated by Li Liangdu, May 13, 2003)

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