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Animal parts seized in jungle raid

Minister: Haul by Perhilitan could fetch up to RM500,000

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PUTRAJAYA: Claws and fangs of the endangered Malaysian tiger and clouded leopard were among animal parts seized by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (Perhilitan) in a raid.

The animal parts that were seized in the raid which was conducted on Monday in Hulu Sungai Tersat, Terengganu, could fetch up to RM500,000 in the black market, said Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Dr Xavier Jayakumar.

"This is one of the biggest hauls by Perhilitan, and the biggest by far this year," Dr Jayakumar told a press conference at his ministry here yesterday.

Perhilitan's tactical team called the Special Protected Area Response Team, or 'Sparta' raided the camp at 6.45am on Monday.

During the raid, two Vietnamese men believed to be poachers were arrested.

The team found the wild animal

parts hidden around the duo's camp in a dense part of the jungle.

Also found were wire traps used to catch the animals.

Perhilitan believes the animal parts belong to at least two Malaysian tigers, two clouded leopards, three sunbeams and 12 wild hogs.

The department will conduct forensic tests on the parts before concluding which animals the items belong to.

Dr Jayakumar said the two suspects, aged 25 and 29, were being interrogated.

"We believe there are more people involved in this and are either in hiding or have fled.

"We have seized the two suspects' handphone and hopefully we can extract information from it, and we will share details with Interpol as well," said Dr Jayakumar.

The minister said the discovery was an unhappy one as it showed that the endangered Malaysian tiger continued to be hunted.

"When I saw the photos, it saddened me.



Job well done: Dr Jayakumar (second from left) showing items seized during Perhilitan's successful operation at his ministry in Putrajaya. Also present are (from left) Perhilitan director-general Datuk Abdul Kadir Abu Hashim, the ministry's secretary-general Datuk Zurinah Pawanteh and enforcement officer Hamidi Jamali.

"We hope we can raise awareness that our tigers are critically endangered," he said. "Our ministry will step up enforcement but we are seeking the help of the Defence Ministry and Home Ministry to boost our patrol teams with more boots

on the ground." It is believed that there are only about 200 Malaysian tigers left in Peninsular Malaysia.