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RM1m wildlife parts bound for China seized

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JOHOR BARU — Police, with the assistance of the Wildlife and National Parks Department, have busted a regional syndicate suspected of smuggling wildlife animal parts from Indonesia for the China black market.

Five Malaysian men, aged between 29 and 72 years, were arrested, and about RM1 million worth of exotic wildlife parts seized in an operation codenamed "Ops Rimau" on Thursday.

Bukit Aman Internal Security and Public Order Department director commissioner Datuk Zulkifli Abdullah said investigations revealed the syndicate had been operating in Johor since 2010.

"In the first raid at about 6pm, four suspects were detained in a house in Taman Johor Jaya after police seized about 13.8kg of wildlife parts, including internal organs," he told reporters at the Seri Alam district police headquarters here yesterday.

"Another suspect was caught at a house in Ulu Tiram where the raiding team seized 23.5kg of wildlife parts."

Also present were Johor police chief Datuk

Mohd Khalil Kader Mohd, deputy police chief Datuk Mohd Kamarudin Md Din and Johor Perhilitan director Jamalun Nasir Ibrahim.

Zulkifli said Johor was used as a transit point before the wildlife parts were shipped off.

Among the items seized were parts from tigers, bears, porcupines and Javanese bisons, mountain goat bones, internal organs, skulls, tusks, testicles and genitalia.

Zulkifli, who is known for his proactive stance on illegal wildlife killing and smuggling of parts, said initial investigations revealed the seized items were meant for medicinal purposes, including aphrodisiac

products as well as exotic ornaments for the Chinese market.

He said Bukit Aman would continue to work together with Indonesian and Chinese counterparts on the case, including the final destination for the products in China.

The case is being investigated under Section 68 of the Wildlife Protection Act 2010.

This latest case is the biggest related to the illegal sale of wildlife parts in Malaysia.

In March, police arrested four men and seized wildlife parts and firearms related to the shooting of an elephant in Gerik, Perak.