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Throwing the book at illegal wildlife traders

SFC, other agencies step up enforcement to protect endangered animals

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MIRI: Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) has commended a Bintulu Sessions Court judge for imposing a RM1.4mil fine and one-year jail sentence on two pangolin smugglers.

SFC chief executive officer Zolkipli Mohamad Aton said the judgment meted out was a stern warning to everyone that the authorities were serious about curbing illegal wildlife trade.

"Let this heavy punishment be a deterrent to those who are involved in illegal hunting, poaching, trading and smuggling of wildlife," he said.

He said they were serious about carrying out enforcement to curb these illegal activities.

"The prosecution and the court are also serious in meting out severe punishments to drive home similar messages," Zolkipli said.

"It is a welcome development," he added.

Zolkipli also said that they were working closely with all the other enforcement agencies in the state to protect endangered wildlife.

They are also carrying out checks at *tamus* (weekly markets), urban markets and in pet



Heavy punishment will be a deterrent to those who are involved in the illegal wildlife trade.

Zolkipli Mohamad Aton



shops to curb the illegal wildlife trade, he said.

Bintulu Sessions Court judge Norhamizah Shaifuddin on Tuesday found ship owner Tan Choon Haw and a worker, Por Seong Wooi, guilty of smuggling 146 live pangolins on their vessel in the South China Sea on April 5, 2018.

They were jailed one year and fined RM1.4mil each in default of four months jail.

Two other foreign workers – from India and Vietnam – were acquitted of smuggling charges.

They were caught about five nautical miles off Bintulu shore by the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency.