

Star Tortoise, Pangolin Scales Favourites in Wild Life Smuggling

- Thirteen persons have been arrested in six pan-India operations in crackdown on illegal wildlife trade
- **DRI conducted six pan-India operations** over the last 10 days against illegal wildlife trafficking.
- **13 persons arrested** during the operations.
- Major seizures included:
 - **2 leopard pelts/skins**
 - **180 live Indian Star Tortoises**
 - **12 live Tokay Geckos**
 - **Around 24 kg pangolin scales**
 - **500 grams tiger bones**
- **Leopard:** Two separate operations in **Odisha and Madhya Pradesh** resulted in seizure of leopard skins and action against alleged poaching/illegal trade networks.
- **Indian Star Tortoises:** **180 live tortoises** were recovered near Bengaluru, concealed in six cloth covers; the species is listed under **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
- **Pangolin scales:** DRI recovered **14.68 kg in Meghalaya** and about **9 kg in Assam**; pangolins are protected under Schedule I and listed in **CITES Appendix I**.
- **Tokay Geckos:** **12 live geckos** were seized in Assam; they are listed under **Schedule I and CITES Appendix II**.
- **Tiger bones:** About **0.5 kg of tiger bone with skull and teeth** was recovered in Karbi Anglong, Assam.
- Seized wildlife, vehicles and accused persons were **handed over to respective State Forest Departments** for further legal action.
- Operations demonstrate the **varied forms of illegal wildlife trafficking**, including live animals, skins, scales and animal parts.
- DRI coordinated with **Forest Departments, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)** and other enforcement agencies.
- Enforcement action is being taken under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, with international controls also relevant through **CITES**.

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Continuing its intelligence-led crackdown on the illegal trafficking of protected wildlife and wildlife derivatives, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) conducted six significant operations at different locations across the country in last 10 days, resulting in the seizure of a two leopard pelts, 180 live Indian Star Tortoises, 12 live Tokay Geckos, around 24 kg Pangolin Scales and 500 grams Tiger bones. Thirteen persons were arrested across these six operations.

In an intelligence led operation on 07.09.2026, officers of DRI, in Jeypore, Koraput district, Odisha, intercepted a person and recovered **one leopard pelt** from his possession. Leopards are protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and trade, sale, purchase, possession or transportation of their pelts or parts is prohibited. The leopard pelt and the apprehended person were handed over to the State Forest Department, Koraput, for further investigation and legal action under the Act.



In another operation on the same day, officers of DRI intercepted a person near Gandhinagar, Bengaluru and examination of his baggage resulted in the recovery of **180 live Indian Star Tortoises** concealed in six cloth covers. The species was identified by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) as *Geochelone Elegan* and is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The striking star-like pattern on the shell of the Indian Star Tortoise has made it particularly attractive in the exotic pet and wildlife-collector markets, driving illegal capture and international trafficking. The 180 live tortoises were seized under the Act and the accused was arrested.



In the third operation on 07.09.2026, officers of DRI, intercepted a Bolero truck in Ri-Bhoi district, Meghalaya, while it was proceeding towards Mawhati. Thorough checking of the vehicle led to the recovery of **14.68 kg dried Pangolin** scales, packed in three carry bags. Pangolins are protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and are also listed in Appendix I of CITES. Pangolins are among the most heavily trafficked mammals in the world, with their scales primarily sought for use in traditional medicine in parts of Asia. The recovered pangolin scales, along with the apprehended person and the vehicle, were handed over to the Range Forest Officer, Nongpoh, Meghalaya, for further necessary action.



Earlier, on 05–06.09.2026, DRI officers, in an operation targeting an illegal leopard skin trade network, coordinated with the Forest Department, Sidhi, Madhya Pradesh and intercepted four persons in Sidhi district. **One leopard skin** was recovered from two persons travelling in a Mahindra Thar. Follow-up investigations and searches led to the identification and interception of two further members of the syndicate, besides recovery of incriminating evidence relating to the alleged illegal poaching, possession, transportation and proposed sale of leopard skin and its parts. The leopard skin and vehicle were seized and the persons were handed over to the Forest Department, Sidhi, for further action under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.



On 05.09.2026, DRI officers, acting on specific intelligence regarding an illegal wildlife trade, intercepted two persons, in Keokhali, Assam and recovered **12 live Tokay Geckos** from their possession. The Tokay Gecko is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and CITES Appendix II. Tokay Geckos are trafficked mainly for their use in traditional medicine in parts of Asia, particularly in dried form, but also has some demand as an exotic pet. The live geckos were seized under the Act and the two apprehended persons, along with the wildlife articles, were handed over to the Range Forest Officer, Biswanath Wildlife Division, Assam, for further action.



Earlier, on 28.08.2026, DRI officers in Karbi Anglong district, intercepted three persons travelling in a vehicle, and the operation resulted in the recovery of around 9 kg Pangolin scales and approximately 0.5 kg of Tiger bone set with skull and teeth. The recovered wildlife articles and vehicle were seized under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and the three persons were handed over to the Forest Range Officer, Bokolia, Assam, for further necessary action.



Pangolin scales and Tiger bones

The diverse recoveries — from live endangered wildlife to animal skins, pangolin scales and tiger parts — also demonstrate the varied forms in which wildlife is trafficked and the need for sustained inter-agency coordination.

DRI has been successfully disrupting wildlife trafficking networks and protecting India's rich biodiversity through coordinated, intelligence-driven enforcement under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, in close cooperation with the Forest Departments, WCCB, and other enforcement agencies.