

Chester Zoo sanctuary for tortoises seized from smugglers

Jul 15 2004

Daily Post

A GROUP of highly sought-after tortoises has been given a new home at Chester Zoo after being rescued from smugglers.

Around 350 juvenile Indian Star Tortoises were found by Customs when a Malaysian courier tried to take them into Hong Kong in a suitcase.

Now eight of the animals, which are native to Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, will be re-homed in Chester with the others going to experienced breeders across Europe.

Kevin Buley, the zoo's curator of lower vertebrates and invertebrates, said: "The continued smuggling of protected tortoises, such as the Indian Star Tortoise, has driven many species to the point of extinction.

At Chester Zoo, they will form part of a managed breeding group with other zoos around Europe.