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KUDOS to the Wildlife and National Parks Department for proposing that the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 be amended to include all plants and animals under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES). The department's director of enforcement Mislihah Mohd Bashir said the amendment could take time as the proposal needed to be first submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment. She was responding to the report "Demand Driven: The Trade of Indian Star Tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*) in Peninsular Malaysia". Mislihah added that she was aware that the species was being smuggled in but there was nothing the department could do once they were in the country as the species was not listed under the Act. The report's co-author, Chris R. Shepherd of Traffic Southeast Asia, said unprotected species included amphibians, endangered turtles, exotic tortoises and freshwater fish species.

Mislihah admits that her department is currently understaffed and will be recruiting to beef up enforcement. They are also in need of technical support to identify animals and animal parts in instances where endangered animal parts may have been reduced to powder form. NGOs have long claimed that the country's ports were part of the trade in endangered species because of poor enforcement of CITES. One authority estimates that wildlife smuggling to supply the demand-generated international pet trade grosses US\$6 billion (RM22.8 billion) worldwide. We must act quickly to put our laws and enforcement in place so that we do not become party to the exploitation of endangered species for profit.

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