

## **BKSDA officials rescue protected turtles** *National News - March 16, 2005*

**Indra Harsaputra**, The Jakarta Post, Surabaya The East Java Natural Resources Conservation Body (BKSDA) has foiled a smuggling attempt of 7,275 turtles from Merauke, Papua. During the raid in Tanjung Perak seaport here on Monday, the BKSDA officials also seized a black head parrot (*Lorius lorry*). Chief of the BKSDA Nurhadi Utomo said that the turtles and parrots are now in good hands at the BKSDA's office in Kutisari area, Surabaya. The animals will soon be handed over either to Surabaya Zoo or Prigen Safari Park, where they will receive medical care before being set free, said Nurhadi. According to Nurhadi, there have been no other turtle smuggling attempts through the port. Out of the 7,275 turtles, 145 died due to lack of oxygen. The pig-nosed turtles (*Carettochelys insculpta*) were found inside several drums inside a boat crew room. Besides seizing the protected animals, the officials also arrested four suspects in the smuggling attempt, namely Yoseph Diaz, the captain of *Tri Jaya Abadi* boat and three other crew members, Supriyadi, Agus Krisdiantoro and Sapto Haryono. The suspects will be charged with smuggling protected animals. If they are found guilty, they could face a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment and a Rp 200,000 (US\$22,222) fine for violating the law on the Natural Resources Conservation Body. Nurhadi said that his office had been alarmed by the case and were investigating whether other protected animals were being smuggled into Surabaya. "We are closely monitoring some places in Surabaya where the trade of protected animals is known to take place, such as Bratang bird market and an animal market in the city," said Nurhadi. The pig-nosed turtle is a protected species under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). This turtle species can grow up to 55 centimeters long. The turtle can easily be found traded in some animal markets in Surabaya and sold for between US\$1 and US\$5 per animal.

Source: Chris Shepherd, TRAFFIC