



World Environment News



Rare beetles land Germans in hot water

Date: 05-Feb-04

Country: SOUTH AFRICA

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The four men were arrested near the town of Ceres in the Western Cape province on January 9 in a sting operation in which police uncovered a number of the endangered beetles, which are highly prized by international collectors.

Cousins Albert and Gunter Rautenstrauch, along with Wolfgang Schubert and Werner Lenz, admitted they were in possession of the beetles, the South African Press Association (SAPA) reported this week.

Officials found a total of 211 beetles among the 842 insects and seven scorpions in the Germans' possession.

"All their equipment has been forfeited to the board as well as all insects and beetles," Paul Gildenhuys of the Western Cape environmental crime unit told SAPA.

The Cape stag beetle, also known by its genus name, Colophon, occurs only in isolated pockets in the mountains of the Western Cape province around Cape Town, and has been listed as endangered under South African law.

South African environmental officials have sought to get tough on poachers who are drawn to the country for its array of unique wildlife.

Last month, three Japanese nationals pleaded guilty and were each fined \$15,000 for being in the possession of 14 Angulata tortoises, which are listed as a protected species.

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