



NOTES and INFORMATION

ONLINE TRADE OF GIANT SALAMANDERS (Cryptobranchidae: *Andrias* Tschudi, 1837) IN THE PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT – Giant salamanders (*Andrias* Tschudi, 1837) are among the world's largest amphibians and are listed in CITES Appendix I since 1975. Despite international and national legal protection, the illegal trade for these species persists. This study documents the online trade dynamics of giant salamanders in the Philippines through the online survey of social media and e-commerce platforms, analysis of wildlife seizure records, and review of open-source new articles. A total of 27 individuals, comprising *Andrias davidianus* and *A. japonicus*, were offered for sale on Facebook by a trader based in the National Capital Region. Prices ranged from PHP4,000 for a juvenile to hundreds of thousands of Philippine Pesos for a live sub-adult specimen. The review of wildlife seizure records from 2010–2024 revealed only one case involving giant salamanders. The lack of CITES trade records for giant salamanders in the Philippines for the past 50 years strongly suggests that individuals for sale on Facebook were illegally imported and traded. This study underscores the role of online platforms in facilitating illegal wildlife trade and highlight gaps in enforcement, prosecution, and platform self-regulation. Stronger coordination among Philippine authorities, enhanced online monitoring, and stricter accountability for digital marketplaces are critical to curbing illegal wildlife trade and protecting these critically endangered amphibians.

Keywords: CITES, e-commerce, Facebook, smuggling, social media



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