

## Smuggled turtles flown back to their home in India

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PUNE: Wildlife SOS India and ACRES Singapore have repatriated over 50 Indian Star Tortoises that were sold into Singapore as victims of illegal wildlife trafficking.

The tortoises will now be sent to their natural habitat in the forests of Karnataka, from where they had been smuggled. The Singapore authorities had confiscated the tortoises, that had been illegally smuggled into that country earlier.

Wildlife SOS got permissions to send home the tortoises that were indigenous to India. Investigations confirmed Karnataka was the origin of the tortoises. A team of senior forest officers travelled with Wildlife SOS CEO Kartick Satyanarayan to Singapore to conduct physical inspection of the tortoises housed at the ACRES rescue center.

Singapore Airlines contributed to the cause of wildlife conservation by transporting the tortoises for free, said sources.

A three member team from Wildlife SOS India including veterinary director Arun A Sha, special projects manager Wasim Akram and Communication and press officer Arinita Sandilya accompanied the tortoises from Singapore to India. They were joined by a three member team from Acres Singapore led by Anbarasi Boopal - deputy CEO.

Specially designed boxes were used to transport the tortoises for the long plane journey. After the tortoises complete their quarantine period of three months, Wildlife SOS will radio tag and monitor these reptiles for survival.