

wildlife crimes

SEIZURES

AMAZONAS, BRAZIL - A WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING HOTSPOT

Between January and April 2025, cases of wildlife seizures were recorded for the Amazonas state, totaling at least eight incidents. The operations took place mainly in the city of Manaus. These seizures were carried out by environmental enforcement agencies, notably Ibama and ICMBio, and were documented through local news portals. Across these

incidents, authorities seized **380 live individuals and 400 kilograms of bushmeat** for human consumption. The confiscated species included **321 river turtles** (*Podocnemis* spp.), **38 tambaquis** (*Colossoma macropomum*), **8 arapaimas** (*Arapaima gigas*), **1 arowana** (*Osteoglossum bicirrhosum*), and **1 caiman** (*Caiman crocodilus*). The information sources include local news blogs and online media outlets, highlighting the enforcement efforts carried out by environmental and police authorities.

Notably, a case requires particular attention due to the seizure of **six live primates from multiple species**, including *Lagothrix* sp. and *Cebus* sp., being kept illegally in an urban residence in Pauini (southern Amazonas). Although the reports stated that the animals would be transferred to the CETAS in Rio Branco, Acre, a follow-up



A **jaguar cub** (*Panthera onca*) was rescued from an illegal captivity site. The animal was being kept in violation of Brazilian environmental laws.



A **scarlet macaw** (*Ara macao*) was found being used illegally for tourism promotion by a hotel in Manaus. The case is currently under investigation by the Public Prosecutor's Office.

check with the unit revealed that the transfer only took place at the end of May (pers. inf.). This discrepancy points to a possible gap between the reported procedures and the actual destination or handling of the seized animals.

On February 5, the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP) launched an investigation into the illegal use of a **scarlet macaw** (*Ara macao*) by a hotel in Manaus, which was allegedly exploiting the bird for

tourism purposes. According to the report, the macaw - known for its vibrant plumage and popularity in the pet and tourism industries - was being kept on the premises without proper authorization, potentially in violation of Brazilian environmental regulations. Only one individual was involved in the case. The bird's use in commercial activities raises legal and ethical concerns about wildlife welfare and exploitation.

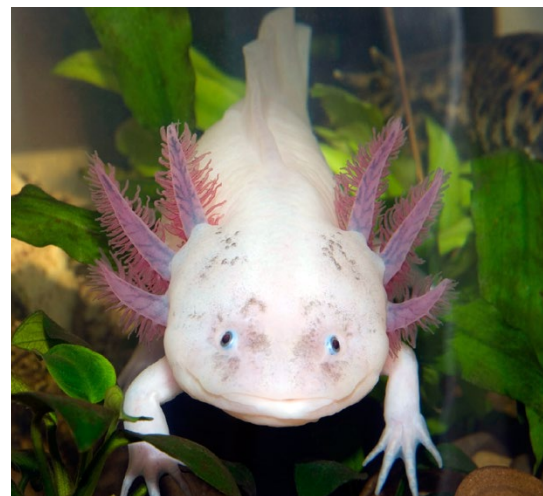
In February, a **jaguar cub** was rescued in Santo Antônio do Içá, Amazonas, after being kept as a pet by a local family. The animal, named Golias, had been found alone during a hunting trip and was adopted by the family. Civil Defense was called, and the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (Ibama) transferred Golias to Tefé with the goal of detaching him from human care and encouraging his natural instincts. The cub received specialized veterinary support and was transferred to Goiás state. On March 28, **3 axolotls** (*Ambystoma mexicanum*), a species of neotenic salamander native to Mexico, were rescued by

authorities in Manaus, Amazonas. The animals were intercepted at a Correios (postal service) facility, indicating an attempt to traffic them through the mail. The presence of axolotls in postal transit raises concerns about the unregulated online trade of exotic animals and the use of postal services for trafficking.

Wildlife trafficking in the Amazon poses serious threats to biodiversity, public health, and animal welfare. The removal of species from their natural habitats disrupts ecosystems



Lagothrix sp.



Axolotl (*Ambystoma mexicanum*)

and accelerates biodiversity loss. Many trafficked animals, such as primates and birds, suffer abuse when used for entertainment or kept as pets. These practices often involve poor conditions, neglect, and high mortality rates. The trade is frequently linked to organized crime, enabling smuggling and financial fraud. It also increases the risk of zoonotic disease transmission through close contact in captivity. Enforcement remains challenging due to geographic isolation and limited resources. Combating this issue requires coordinated action across conservation, public security, and education sectors.



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