



5



7

**Dirk Heinrich Photo Library - DHPL**

22. April um 16:33 · 🌐

**Smuggler fined €4000 (N\$81450)**

89 animals illegally taken alive from Namibia via Addis Ababa to Vienna

By Dirk Heinrich

A now 51 year old Czech who was found trying to smuggle 85 geckos, two snakes and two scorpions from Namibia into the EU via the Vienna Airport on the 23rd of May 2023 has been charged and fined 4000 Euros by a court in Austria (no date given) and all animals forfeited to the state. This was confirmed by the Head Public Relations Official of the Austrian Ministry of Finance, Steffan Trittner, after inquiring via e-mail a month ago. No further details were given because of "protection of data privacy".

The Head of Public Relations of Tiergarten Schönbrunn, the Vienna zoo, Johanna Bukovsky, replied on enquiry that "all geckos, snakes and scorpions are well". Bukovsky confirmed the list of species and number of animals of each species given last year on request. No further details were given.

The species confiscated are 25 x Koch's gecko (*Pachydactylus kochii*), 6 x Namib web-footed gecko (*Pachydactylus rangei*), 48 x Carp's barking gecko (*Ptenopus carpi*), 6 x Namib giant gecko (*Chondrodactylus angulifer*), 2 x sub-adult Bug-eyed house snake (*Boaedon mentalis*) and 2 x scorpions one being *Opisthophthalmus carinatus* and one *Parabuthus villosus*.

Last year on the 1st of July I reported that "officials of the Austrian Ministry of Finance at the Vienna Airport found 85 geckos, two snakes and two scorpions in the luggage of a 50 year old Czech on the 23rd of May this year. The customs officials, according to reports in several Austrian newspapers and on the South African Afrikaans news platform "Maroelamedia" on the 20th of June 2023, put the value of the smuggled animals at 47000 Euros. In a press release by the Austrian Ministry of Finance the Czech man travelled from Addis Ababa to Vienna and moved with his luggage through the "nothing to declare" customs channel when he was stopped by customs and searched. They then found geckos, snakes and scorpions in three boxes in his baggage. The animals, some of which were in bad condition, were handed over to the Schönbrunn Zoo in Vienna".

When I saw a photo taken by customs officials and which was published with the articles, I recognised the geckos as Carp's barking geckos, a species endemic to Namibia. Since Ethiopian Air flies from Windhoek's Hosea Kutako International Airport to Addis Ababa where travellers have to change airplanes to get to different destinations (like Vienna), it was clear to me that these animals must have been collected in Namibia.

According to the press release on the 20th of June, Austrian custom officials were told by the 50 year old Czech that "the geckos are worthless to him since he took them along to feed his snakes". According to the Austrian Ministry of Finance the geckos, snakes and scorpions are each worth €250 and more.

The animals were most probably all collected illegally in the Dorob National Park and multiple laws were broken. Furthermore is it illegal to take animals out of Namibia without the necessary export permits (CITES, veterinary, etc.) and taking them into another country without import permits.

Executive Director of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT), Teofilus Nghitila, a few days ago said that MEFT had not been informed by anybody officially about the case up to now.

[#czechsmuggler](#) [#namibiangeckos](#) [#namibdesert](#) [#dorobnationalpark](#) [#carpsbarkinggecko](#)



5



© Austrian Ministry of Finance

© Austrian Ministry of

+2

Du, Anke Graßmann und 22 weitere Personen

3 15

Wütend

Komentieren

Teilen

Relevanteste



Komentieren ...



Kelsey Prediger

That seems like a measly fine compared to the estimated value of €47,000, hopefully there can be more concerted efforts against this trade 🙄

3 Tage **Gefällt mir** **Antworten**



Mela Stehn

Is there a chance to get them back to Namibia?

4 Tage **Gefällt mir** **Antworten**





ISAP · [Folgen](#)

Mela Stehn no, no chance! There is no contact between Austria and Namibia regarding this case as far as I could establish. Bringing these animals back would be of no use because we do not know where they were collected. Putting them not back in their t... **Mehr anzeigen**

4 Tage **Gefällt mir** **Antworten** 2

