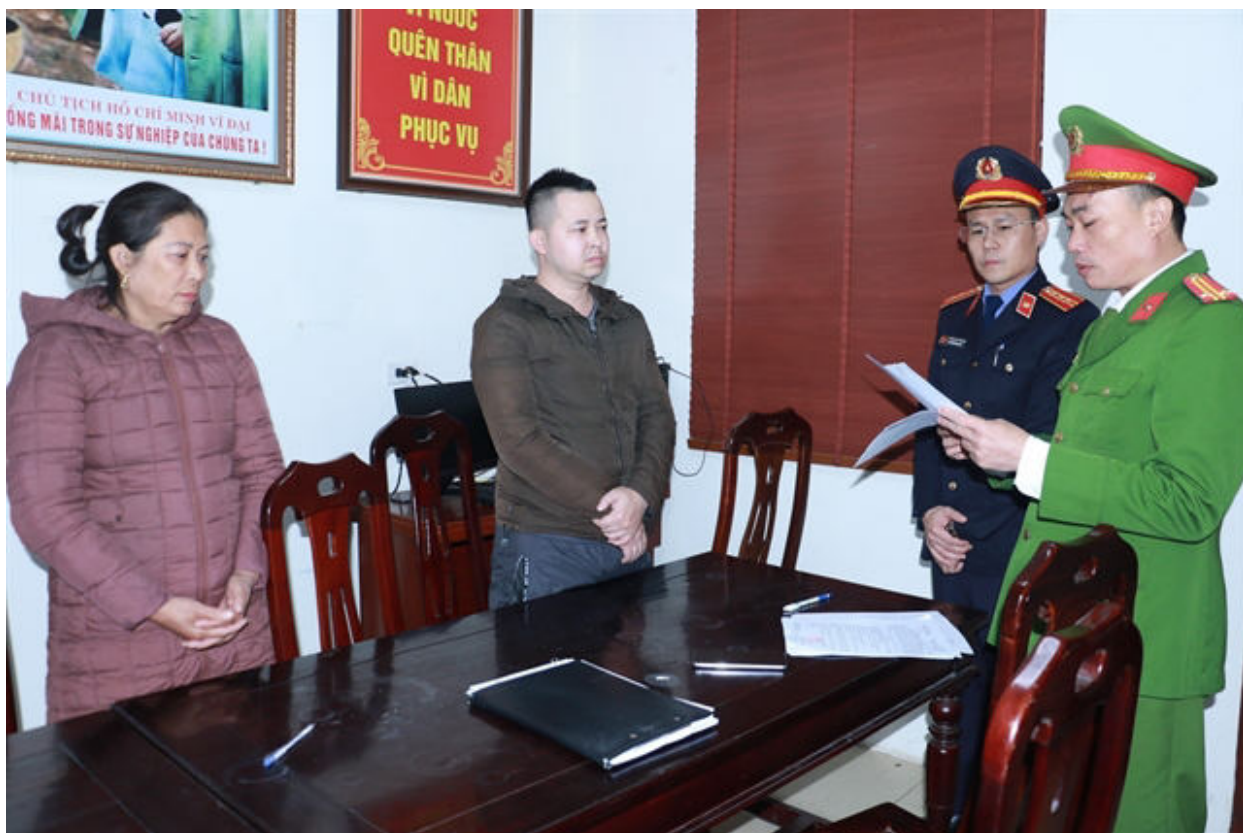


Việt Nam jails six people over trafficking of 2.8 tonnes of pangolin scale



Police read the arrest warrant to Hồ Văn Mạnh and Trần Thị Ngọc. — VNA/VNS Photo

NGHỆ AN — Six people have been jailed for their involvement in the illegal trade of more than 2.8 tonnes of pangolin scales, one of the country's largest such seizures ever recorded.

The People's Court of Nghệ An handed a seven-year prison term to Hồ Văn Mạnh and a three-year sentence to Trần Thị Ngọc for trading prohibited goods and violating regulations on the protection of endangered wildlife.

Four other defendants – Phạm Thị Lập, Hồ Mai Yên, Cao Xuân Quý, and Nguyễn Thị Long – received sentences ranging from 15 months to three years. Quý and Long were given suspended sentences.

A related suspect, Lê Quang Lợi, remains at large and is currently wanted by authorities.

The group was detained in October 2023 after being caught illegally trading 2.8 tonnes of pangolin scales, including those from the *Sunda pangolin* (*Manis javanica*) and several African species.

All eight pangolin species are listed in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which bans international trade of the animals.

The Sunda and the Chinese pangolins, both found in Việt Nam, are also listed as protected species under a government decree.

Vietnamese law stipulates that illegal trade of Sunda or Chinese pangolin scales can result in one to five years in prison or fines between VNĐ500 million and VNĐ2 billion (US\$19,000 - \$76,000).

Trade involving other pangolin species may be punishable by up to 15 years' imprisonment or administrative fines, depending on the value of the goods.



Pangolin scales seized by the police. — VNA/VNS Photo

The Education for Nature Vietnam (ENV) said the case represents one of the largest volumes of pangolin scales ever trafficked Việt Nam.

The organisation also identified the central province of Nghệ An as a long-standing hotspot for illegal wildlife trafficking, particularly in the districts of Diễn Châu, Yên Thành, and Quỳnh Lưu.

Despite some attention from provincial authorities, ENV warned that the situation remains complex and poses challenges to the country's commitments to international wildlife protection.

"A stronger response from the entire political system in Nghệ An, along with increased involvement from the central government and relevant ministries, is needed to resolve the issue effectively," an ENV representative said. — VNS

