

Nearly 260 smuggled reptiles found at Dutch airport

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Agents seized almost 260 reptiles, including protected lizards, crammed into suitcases at Amsterdam airport and arrested three Spaniards suspected of trafficking the creatures, Dutch authorities said Monday.

The illegal stash of wildlife that arrived from Mexico was uncovered Saturday and is worth some 80,000 euros (\$89,000), according to the Dutch food and consumer watchdog NVWA.

Among the seized animals were 14 San Esteban chuckwallas, which look similar to iguanas and are protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

"Of the 259 animals found, 10 were dead," Dutch health and customs authorities said in a statement.

The three Spanish suspects were being held by police and are accused of trafficking and animal cruelty.

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