

**Endangered Species Advisory Committee**

**Summary Progress Report of CITES Work  
1/1/2017 – 30/9/2017**

**Enforcement**

The table below shows the number of inspections and enforcement actions taken during the reporting period:

**Comparison with same period last year**

	<b>1/1/2017 – 30/9/2017</b>	<b>1/1/2016– 30/9/2016</b>	<b>Variation</b>
Consignment inspection (import, export, transit)	19,877	20,372	-2.4%
Local inspection	2,081	1,371	+51.8%
No. of investigation	436	401	+9%
No. of seizure	424	385	+10%
No. of prosecution	147	115	+28%

2. Majority of cases involved import or transit of endangered species. More significant cases are summarised below:

<b>Case No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>CITES document available</b>	<b>Date of Incident</b>	<b>Results/Remarks</b>
254/2017	Suspected illegal import of 7,200kg of pangolin scales (App. I) from Nigeria	No	29/05/2017	Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) conducted an inspection of a sea cargo from Nigeria to HK. The cargo was declared to contain processed charcoal. Upon inspection, 7,200kg of pangolin scales (App. I) were found and they were subsequently seized. This case is under investigation.

308/2017	Suspected illegal import of around 7 tonnes of ivory tusks and cut pieces (App. I) from Malaysia	No	04/07/2017	C&ED inspected a 40-foot container declared to contain frozen fish arriving from Malaysia at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound. Customs officers found ivory tusks and cut pieces behind the frozen fish cartons inside the container. A total of 7 tonnes of ivory tusks and cut pieces (App.I) were seized. Investigation is under progress.
398/2017	Suspected illegal import of 13,380kg of red sandalwood (App. II) from Malaysia to China via Hong Kong	No	25/08/2017	C&ED selected a container which was transited from Malaysia to the Mainland via HK and declared to contain wood logs of <i>Gluta</i> species. Upon examination, 13,380 kg of red sandalwood (App. II) was found and subsequently seized. Investigation is ongoing.
150/2017 180/2017	Illegal import of 220 head of live turtles/ tortoises (App. I & App. II) from Bangladesh	No	21/03/2017 09/04/2017	C&ED at the Airport intercepted two Mainland passport holders who imported live turtles and tortoises without permits. A total of 220 heads of live turtles/ tortoises (App. I & App. II) were seized. Both offenders were prosecuted, convicted and sentenced for 4 weeks imprisonment.

Various cases	Among various cases during the reporting period, 38 Mainland passport holders and 1 Indonesian passport holder illegally imported 272kg of ivory (App. I) from various African countries and Indonesia to Hong Kong	No	From Jan to Sep 2017	C&ED at the airport intercepted a total of 38 Mainland passport holders and one Indonesian passport holder who imported worked ivory without permits. A total of 272kg of ivory was seized from these cases. All offenders were prosecuted and convicted. The sentences ranged from a fine of \$2,000 to imprisonment for 3 months.
223/2017	Illegal export of 1.9kg of incense tree (App. II)	No	08/05/2017	C&ED intercepted a Mainland passport holder who illegally exported 1.9kg of incense tree at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point. 1.9 kg of incense tree wood chips was found inside the person's backpack. The offender was prosecuted, convicted and sentenced for 3 weeks imprisonment.

098/2017 124/2017 159/2017 160/2017 161/2017 173/2017 234/2017	Suspected illegal possession of 15 tails of live humphead wrasses (App. II) for commercial purpose	No	27/01/2017 03/03/2017 28/03/2017 28/03/2017 28/03/2017 07/04/2017 19/05/2017	The cases were either intelligence driven or a result of local inspections. A total of 15 tails of humphead wrasse were found being sold without the required Licence to Possess at 2 restaurants and 5 seafood stalls. One restaurant and one seafood stall were prosecuted, convicted and sentenced for a fine of \$10,000 and \$30,000 respectively. The other cases are either in the process of prosecution or under investigation.
117/2017	Illegal possession of two head of live marmosets (App. II)	No	20/02/2017	A complaint regarding possession of live monkeys in a residential premise was received from a member of public via government hotline. An investigation was conducted and found two live marmosets at the location under complaint. The marmosets were seized. The owner of marmosets was prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced for a fine of \$6,000.
127/2017	Illegal possession of five tails of live giant salamanders (App. I) for commercial purpose	No	06/03/2017	Intelligence was received that five tails of live giant salamanders were offered for sale via Facebook. Decoy operation was successfully conducted and the specimens were seized at the scene. The offender was prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced for a fine of \$10,000.

## Licensing

3. The number of licences and certificates issued during the reporting period is tabulated below:

### Comparison with the same period last year

	1/1/2017 – 30/9/2017	1/1/2016– 30/9/2016	Variation
Import Licence	228	291	-21.6%
Export/Re-export Licence	12313	12959	-5%
Possession Licence	128	97	+32%
Re-export Certificate	1714	1926	-11%
Special Export / Import Licence	18	13	+38.5%

## Disposal of seized specimens

4. The department endeavours to maximise uses of seized specimens for conservation, education or scientific purposes according to the guidelines of CITES. The following items were disposed of during the reporting period following the above principle:

### **(a) Local School/University**

A total of 10 local schools and 1 university have received our confiscated specimens from enforcement operations.

Live specimens donated to local schools / universities during the reporting period included 2 African spurred tortoises, 2 ball pythons, 1 chameleon, 3 spiny tailed lizards, 3 box turtles, and 23 pots of orchids.

Dead specimens donated included 0.7 kg of agarwood, 4 pieces and 2 packs of agarwood chips, 9 Asian box turtle plastrons, 2 Indian roofed turtle plastrons, 10 pieces of sea turtle scales, 41 pieces of sea turtle scale product, 0.1 kg of hawksbill sea turtle shell, 2 Asian cobra skin, 1 boa skin, 6 python skin / skin products, 11 lizard skin / skin products, 27 of crocodile skin / skin products, 1 pangolin skin, 1 elephant skin product, 1 cat skin, 1 cheetah skin, 1 seal skin, 10 blue coral necklaces, 4 stony coral, 18 pairs of giant clam shells, 19 pieces and 31 g of helmeted hornbill beaks, 1 hippo teeth, 1 ivory tusks, 4 ivory cut pieces, 2 ivory scrap, 62 worked ivory, and 8 ivory chopsticks.

### **(b) Other local institutes/ organisation and government departments**

Live animals donated to other local institutes/ organizations and government departments include 6 red footed tortoises, 5 leopard tortoises, 60 Indian star tortoises, 17 spiny-tailed lizards, 3 African spurred tortoises, and 1 eclectus parrot.

Dead specimens donated included 13 crocodile skin, 5 lizard skin, 2 python skin, 1 crocodile stuffed specimen, 18.7 kg of pangolin scales, 4 rhino horns, 4 saiga horns, 5 vials of bear bile powder, 9387.6 kg of Thailand Rosewood, 1 piece of

agarwood, 8 pieces of agarwood chips and 1 box of American ginseng.

**(c) Overseas institutes / organisation**

Live animals donated to overseas organisations included 3 tails of humphead wrasses, 400 black pond turtles, and 2 Siamese crocodiles.

**Publicity and Education**

5. Continuous efforts were also maintained in educating the general public, students and the traders on endangered species protection and trade regulation. Sixteen exhibitions on endangered species protection were held at schools and public venues, including the Chinese Medicine Zone at the Hong Kong Trade Development Council Food Expo 2017, the 31st International Travel Expo and the roving exhibitions in Community Hall/Community Centres and public libraries.

6. A total of 55 educational talks on endangered species protection were conducted for students, traders, members of non-government organisations and the general public, including a seminar for members of the Hong Kong Professional Tourist Guides General Union held on 10 January 2017. A total of 12,850 visitors visited the Endangered Species Resource Centre during the reporting period and guided tours to the centre were arranged for group visits through booking in advance.

7. The following publicity activities and consultation meetings targeted at control of ivory were arranged during the reporting period:

- Regarding the plan to phase out the local trade in elephant ivory, liaison and consultation with the traders and relevant stakeholders has been maintained over the year. Two consultation meetings were arranged with the ivory traders and relevant stakeholders in February and April 2017 to keep the trade informed of the latest development of the plan and to collect feedbacks and views from the trade. The Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants (Amendment) Ordinance 2017 was published in Gazette in June 2017;
- Two circular letters were also issued in June and September 2017 to i) update the ivory trade on the development of plan to phase out of the local trade in ivory; and ii) consult the ivory craftsmen on their re-employment training needs;
- The advertisement in form of TV broadcasting arranged at five Shenzhen immigration control points (Lo Wu, Huanggang, Man Kam To, Sha Tau Kok and Futian) continued until 21 April 2017; and
- A publicity event was carried out at different land control points, Hung Hom Railway Station, Hong Kong-China Ferry Terminal and Hong Kong International Airport from 4 to 25 January 2017. During the event, publicity materials were distributed to travellers and members of the public, and posters and panels were displayed on site.

8. To remind the public on illegal felling and smuggling of agarwood, a publicity event was organised with the Customs & Excise Department (C&ED) at all control points since February 2017. A series of publicity materials, ranging from poster, banner and roll-up panel were produced and displayed at all control points.

### **International and Local Liaison and Meeting**

9. A representative from the Department attended the annual meeting between the CITES Management Authorities of the Central Government, Macao SAR and Hong Kong SAR held in Mainland China from 25 to 28 July 2017. The Management Authorities updated each other on their CITES implementation work and discussed issues of common concerns, such as trade and regulatory control in endangered species, major enforcement operation and joint publicity event.

10. Two professional officers of the Department attended the 29<sup>th</sup> Animals Committee to CITES held from 18 to 22 July 2017 and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Plants Committee from 22 to 27 July 2017, respectively in Geneva, Switzerland as part of the delegation of the People's Republic of China. The issues on CITES implementation on CITES-listed animals and plant, as well as other related issues were discussed at the meeting.

### **Training**

11. To equip the frontline staff of C&ED with necessary knowledge in the implementation of Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance, Cap. 586 and identification of endangered species, eight training courses were conducted for C&ED officers stationed at the Hong Kong International Airport during the reporting period. The training courses covered the regulatory requirements of endangered species under Cap. 586 and CITES and identification of endangered species specimens that might be encountered during their daily enforcement work.

12. To prepare for the new control on sharks following the decisions made in 17th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, three training courses were arranged to about 100 AFCD and C&ED officers in April 2017. The training courses focused on visual identification of shark fins, and were supplemented with overview of global shark management and conservation measures and importance of Hong Kong in global shark fin trade in order to give a comprehensive picture on shark issues.

13. To provide capacity building to enforcement officers on how to better present prosecutions against wildlife-related offences under the relevant local wildlife crime ordinances and hence enhance court sentencing for wildlife crimes, a one-day workshop "Skill on Wildlife Crime Investigation and Prosecution" was conducted on 20 September 2017. The workshop was run by professionals from Faculty of Law of the University of Hong Kong and Kadoorie Farm and Botanical Garden. A total of 45 enforcement officers from AFCD and C&ED participated in the workshop.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department  
November 2017