

Endangered Species Advisory Committee

Summary Progress Report of CITES Work 1/10/2017 – 31/12/2018

Enforcement

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

Comparison with same period last year

	1/10/2016 – 31/12/2017	<u>1/10/2017 – 31/12/2018</u>	Variation
Consignment inspection (import, export, transit)	35,402	38,722	+9.4%
Local inspection	3,781	4,276	+13.1%
No. of investigation	733	1052	+43.5%
No. of seizure	693	981	+41.6%
No. of prosecution	230	255	+10.9%

2. The majority of cases involved illegal import of endangered species. The major cases are summarised below:

Case No.	Description	CITES document available	Date of Incident	Results/Remarks
613/2018	Illegal import of 7,100 kg of pangolin scales (App.II) from Nigeria	No	17/7/2018	Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) conducted inspection of a sea cargo on 20.7.2018 from Nigeria. The cargo was declared as polyethylene. Upon inspection 7,100 kg pangolin scales were found and consequently seized. The case was investigated by C&ED.

268/2018	Illegal import of 29.2 tonnes of Honduras rosewood (App. II) from Guatemala	No	11.1.2018	C&ED conducted inspection to a sea cargo on 11.1.2018 from Guatemala. The cargo was declared to contain rubber. Upon inspection, 29.2 tonnes of <i>Dalbergia stevensonii</i> (App.II) was found. The receiver of the timber was prosecuted, convicted and sentenced to an imprisonment for 3 months
468/2018	Illegal import of 3.11 kg rhino horn (App.I) from Mozambique	No	17.6.2018	C&ED intercepted an inbound passenger from Mozambique and found in his check-in baggage 3.11 kg of rhino horn cut pieces. The offender was prosecuted and convicted at District Court. He was sentenced to an imprisonment of 8 months which was discounted from 12 months starting point.
791/2018 799/2018 800/2018	Illegal import of a total of 157.15 kg pangolin scales (App.I) from Democratic Republic of Congo	No	13.11.2018 16.11.2018	C&ED intercepted a total of 3 inbound passengers from Democratic Republic of Congo and found in their check-in baggage a total of 157.25 pangolin scales (App.I). All the 3 offenders were prosecuted. Prosecution is in progress.
Various cases	Illegal export of incense tree wood chips via Shenzhen Bay Control Point	No		C&ED intercepted a total of 6 mainlanders who illegally exported a total amount of about 14 kg of incense tree wood chips via Shenzhen Bay Control Point. The offenders were prosecuted, convicted and sentenced for a period of 4 months to 24 months.

50/2018	Illegal possession of 26 heads of live scheduled animals (App.I and App.II)	No	23/01/2018	A joint operation with police regarding illegal possession of live scheduled animals was conducted at two related keeping premises. A total of 26 head of live scheduled animals were seized, including black pond turtle, giant salamander (App.I), otter, slow loris, leopard cat (App.II). The company and the owner of the animals were prosecuted and convicted. A total fine of \$32,000 and 160 hours of Community Services Orders were laid by the court.
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Licensing

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

Comparison with the same period last year

	1/10/2016 – 31/12/2017	1/10/2017 – 31/12/2018	Variation
Import Licence	425	479	+12.7%
Export/Re-export Licence	20152	20648	+2.5%
Possession Licence	207	166	-19.8%
Re-export Certificate	2819	2207	-21.7%
Special Export / Import Licence	29	22	-24.1%

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 schools / institutes

A total of 35 schools and 3 local universities have received our confiscated

specimens from enforcement operations.

One live African spurred tortoise was donated to a local school. For dead specimens, we have donated the following items: 2236 kg Malagasy rosewood, 1017.8 kg red sandalwood, 735.9 kg Thailand rosewood, 0.1 kg Honduras rosewood, 6.6 kg agarwood, 1.4 kg American ginseng roots, 9.1 kg shark fins, 1.2 kg totoaba air bladders, 0.3 kg dried seahorses, 24 turtle nail samples, 86 turtle plastrons, 258 sea turtle scale products, 15 sea turtle shells, 4 sea turtle stuffed specimens, 152 crocodile skin / skin products, 52 lizard skin / skin products, 46 python skin / skin products, 5 alligator skin products, 2 boa skin / skin products, 2 Indian cobra skins, 2 tiger skins, 1 cheetah skin, 1 leopard skin, 1 fishing cat skin, 1 zebra skin, 0.7 kg pangolin scales, 28 mounted specimens of butterfly, 21 humphead wrasses carcasses, 28 blue coral necklaces, 11 stony coral skeletons, 152 giant clam shells, 0.3 kg peacock feather, 51 hornbill beaks, 4 saiga horns, 3 rhino horns, 2 hippo teeth, 11 ivory tusks, 24 ivory cut pieces and 340 worked ivory.

(b) Other local organisations and government departments

Live animals donated to other local organizations and government departments included 33 Fischer's lovebirds, 3 green-cheeked conures, 1 eclectus parrot, 1 red-fan parrot, 1 Bali myna, 15 Asiatic bony tongues, 24 box turtles, 20 spotted turtles, 16 Chinese stripe-necked turtles, 9 diamondback terrapins, 2 pig-nosed turtles, 1 yellow-spotted side-necked turtles, 6 African spurred tortoises, 4 Indian star tortoises, 1 red-footed tortoise, 1 boa constrictor, 1 green tree python, 16 poison dart frogs and 6 otters.

Dead specimens donated included 25,259 kg Malagasy rosewood, 8,819.5 kg Thailand rosewood, 2,843 kg Honduras rosewood, 610 kg red sandalwood, 4.4 kg agarwood, 2.5 kg American ginseng roots, 4 box turtle plastrons, 3 sea turtle scales, 2 sea turtle ornaments, 2 hawksbill stuffed specimens, 1 crocodile stuffed specimen, 5 crocodile skin / skin products, 3 lizard skin / skin products, 2 python skin / skin products, 1 cheetah skin, 8.3 kg pangolin scales, 1 eastern grass-owl stuffed specimen, 4 red deer horns, 1 giant clam shell and 3 hornbill beaks.

(c) Overseas institutes / organisations

Live animals donated to overseas institutes / organisations included 43 wood turtles,

2 Malaysian giant turtles, 2 Bengal roof turtles, 1 box turtle, 28 radiated tortoises, 4 Chinese giant salamanders and 2 marmosets.

Dead specimens donated included 20.8 kg of pangolin scales.

(d) Repatriation

A total of 595 pig-nosed turtles were released back to the natural habitats in their country of origin, Indonesia, with the collaboration with the CITES Management Authority of Indonesia, Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden and International Animal Rescue Indonesia.

Publicity and Education

5. Continuous efforts were maintained in educating the general public, students and the traders on endangered species protection and trade regulation. Thirty-one exhibitions on endangered species protection were held at schools and public venues, including Hong Kong North District Flower Bird Insect and Fish Show 2017, HKTDC Food Expo 2018, Flower Show 2018 and a roving exhibition in Community Halls and Community Centres.

6. A total of 85 educational talks on endangered species protection were conducted for students, traders, general public, local enforcement staff from Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and Customs & Exercise Department (C&ED), non-local governmental and non-governmental bodies (e.g. WWF China and Singapore National Parks Board) as well as the travelling industry (Hong Kong Professional Tourist Guide General Union and Travel Industry Council).

7. The Endangered Species Resource Centre (ESRC) received 22,950 visitors during the reporting period. Guided tours to the centre were arranged for groups by appointment. To further promote our educational resources, in addition to leaflets distributed to schools and district offices, we also participated in various programmes organised by other departments/organisations, such as “Know more about Government Service” jointly organised by the Civil Service Bureau and the Education Bureau, as well as the HK SciFest 2018 organised by the Science Museum.

8. To enhance the awareness and vigilance of travellers about the licensing control over the import, export, re-export and possession of endangered species, a series of

publicity works was carried out at different strategic locations:

- (a) A TV advertisement on the control of endangered species in Hong Kong was broadcasted at five Shenzhen immigration control points (Lo Wu Port, Huang Gang Port, Wenjindu Port, Shatoujiao Port and Fu Tian Port) from 1 February 2018 to 31 May 2018, the theme of which was orchid for the month of February and ivory for March to May.
- (b) TV and/or radio announcements of public interest (API) on the revised penalties have been broadcasted at:
 - (i) AFCD's & ISD's YouTube Channel as well as API webpage since 2 May 2018;
 - (ii) HK International Airport starting from 14 August 2018;
 - (iii) Customs Arrival and Departure Halls at Lok Ma Chau Control Point since 27 November 2018; and
 - (iv) Cross-boundary coaches of Hong Kong Guangdong Boundary Crossing Bus Association Limited and Chinalink Express Holdings Limited since 21 December 2018 for a 3-month trial run;

9. With the legislative amendments of the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap.586), a series of publicity work was conducted to publicise the amendments to the penalty scheme, with emphasis on the phasing out of local trade in ivory, which came into effect on 1 May 2018. Details of the publicity work related to the amendments are presented in the Committee Paper CP/ESAC/1/2019.

10. The schedules of Cap.586 were also amended and came into effect on 1 November 2018 to include: (i) endangered species that had been added to Appendix III of CITES; and (ii) amendments to Appendices I and II to CITES adopted at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES. The following publicity works were conducted to publicise the amendments:

- (a) Circular letters explaining the amendments were delivered to 14,401 relevant parties on 10 July 2018 and the letter was uploaded to our website at www.cites.hk (under What's New).
- (b) Our website was updated on 26 October 2018 with the message "More endangered species are brought into control" with some examples.
- (c) A Facebook post was made on 31 October 2018 to introduce the amendments with a few named examples.

International and Local Liaison and Meeting

11. A senior professional officer of the Department attended the 69th and 70th meetings of the Standing Committee to CITES held from 27 November to 1 December

2017 in Geneva, Switzerland and from 1 to 5 October 2018 in Sochi, Russia respectively as part of the delegation of the People's Republic of China. Besides, two professional officers of the Department attended the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee to CITES held from 16 to 21 July 2018 and the 24th meeting of the Plants Committee to CITES held from 20 to 26 July 2018 respectively in Geneva, Switzerland. The issues on CITES implementation on CITES-listed animals and plants, as well as other related issues were discussed at the meetings.

12. Two professional officers of the Department attended the meeting of the Sea Cargo Customer Liaison Group of the Customs and Excise Department on 14 June 2018 to brief the members on the recent amendments to Cap. 586.

13. A meeting with members of Hong Kong Art Craft Merchants Association Ltd was held on 27 November 2017 to discuss matters related to application for the Licence to Re-export and Re-export Certificate of CITES-listed *Dalbergia* species and to exchange our views on the subject matter.

14. The third meeting of Wildlife Crime Task Force was held on 13 March 2018 with C&ED, Hong Kong Police Force and the Environment Bureau. During the meeting, members discussed matters related to updates of recent enforcement, education and publicity work. After the meeting, members also met with wildlife conservation groups and exchanged views with them on matters of mutual concern.

15. The annual meeting among the CITES Management Authorities of the Central Government, Macao SAR and HKSAR was held in Hong Kong from 20 to 23 August 2018. The Management Authorities updated each other on their CITES implementation work and discussed issues of common concern, such as trade in and regulatory control on endangered species, major enforcement operations and joint publicity events.

Training

16. A six-day training course was organised for 13 officials of the China CITES Management Authority on endangered species identification and CITES implementation from 17 to 22 September 2018. It provided a good opportunity for experience sharing, as well as building up networks and working relationship which would benefit future cooperation between both sides on various CITES-related matters.

17. We organised three training courses on 2, 3 and 8 October 2018 for AFCD and C&ED frontline staff about the legislative amendments to Cap.586 adopted at the 17th

meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES.

18. Fifteen members of AFCD staff attended a three-day training course on identification of reptiles and rosewood organised by the Guangzhou Office of the China CITES Management Authority from 14 to 16 November 2018.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
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