

Public reminded not to bring in endangered species without required licence (with photos)

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and Hong Kong Customs today (January 31) reminded travellers not to bring endangered species into Hong Kong without a required licence when returning from visits to other places.

Under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap 586), the import, export, re-export or possession of endangered animals and plants, including their parts and/or derivatives, are subject to control under a licensing system. The penalties under the Ordinance have been increased since May 1, 2018. Any person importing, exporting or possessing specimens of endangered species not in accordance with the Ordinance will be liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years. The specimens will also be forfeited upon conviction.

An AFCD spokesman noted that more than 740 seizures were made at customs checkpoints in 2018. Some commonly encountered examples are ivory, live reptiles, pangolin scales, dried seahorse, American ginseng and orchids including artificially propagated species such as moth orchid.

The spokesman stressed that as some plant and animal species are facing the threat of extinction due to over-exploitation, import and export of such species are regulated under an international convention.

As the Chinese New Year holiday is drawing near, the AFCD appealed to travellers to pay more attention when buying plant and animal products as souvenirs abroad. "There are examples of imprisonment sentences for bringing highly endangered species products, such as ivory, into Hong Kong. As it might not be easy to know which wildlife souvenirs are from endangered species, travellers are advised not to buy such items if they are not sure if the items are subject to control," the spokesman said.

The AFCD and Customs will continue to work closely and step up their enforcement work in combating the illegal trade in endangered species.

For details of the import of endangered species, please call 1823 or visit the website www.cites.hk.



[Appointments to Standing Committee on Company Law Reform](#)

The Financial Secretary has appointed two new members, Professor Low Chee-keong and Ms Christine Chung Wai-yin, to the Standing Committee on Company Law Reform (SCCLR). The Chairman of the SCCLR, Mr John Scott, SC, and eight incumbent members, namely Mr Bruno Arboit, Ms Linda Chan Ching-fan, SC, Mr Clement Chan Kam-wing, Ms Bonnie Chan Yiting, Mr David Fu Yat-hung, Ms Gillian Meller, Mr Keith Pogson and Mr Bernie Ting Wai-cheung, have been re-appointed.

The appointments and re-appointments are for a term of two years starting from February 1, 2019.

A government spokesman said today (January 31), "With the professional background and expertise of its members, the SCCLR has provided valuable advice on the improvement and modernisation of our company law to be commensurate with Hong Kong's status as an international commercial and financial centre.

"We are grateful to the outgoing members, Professor David Donald and Ms Wendy Yung Wen-ye, for their valuable contributions to the SCCLR over the past six years," the spokesman added.

The SCCLR was set up in 1984. It advises the Financial Secretary on amendments to the Companies Ordinance and the Companies (Winding Up and Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance, as well as amendments to the Securities and Futures Ordinance on matters relating to corporate governance and shareholders' protection, as and when necessary.

As from February 1, 2019, the membership list of the SCCLR will be as follows:

Mr John Scott, SC (Chairman)
Mr Bruno Arboit
Ms Linda Chan Ching-fan, SC
Mr Clement Chan Kam-wing
Ms Bonnie Chan Yiting
Ms Christine Chung Wai-yin
Mr David Fu Yat-hung
Mr David Kidd
Mr Robert Lee Wai-wang
Professor Low Chee-keong
Dr Lewis Luk Tei
Ms Gillian Meller
Mr Albert Ng
Mr Keith Pogson
Mrs Natalia Seng Sze Ka-mee
Ms Cynthia Tang Yuen-shun
Mr Bernie Ting Wai-cheung

Ex-officio Members

Mr David Graham
Chief Regulatory Officer
Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited

Mr Stefan Gannon
Commissioner, Resolution Office
Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Mr Andrew Young
Chief Counsel
Securities and Futures Commission

Ms Ada Chung Lai-ling
Registrar of Companies

Ms Phyllis McKenna
Official Receiver

Ms Winnie Ng Ching-ching
Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Financial Services)
Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau

Dr Stefan Lo Huoy-cheng
Senior Assistant Law Officer (Civil Law)
Department of Justice

Schedule for issuing press releases on statistical data

Following is a reminder of the press releases on statistical data to be issued between February and April 2019. The schedule for issuing press releases on statistical data in 2019 was provided to the media in September 2018. No change has been made to the original schedule.

February 2019

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Date	Press Release
—	—
1	Restaurant receipts and purchases statistics for fourth quarter 2018
19	Year-end population for 2018
19	Volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade for December 2018
21	Unemployment and underemployment statistics for November 2018 – January 2019
22	Consumer Price Index for January 2019
26	External merchandise trade statistics for January 2019
27	Gross Domestic Product for fourth quarter 2018 and whole year of 2018 : data contained in the Budget supporting documents (Note)

March 2019

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Date	Press Release
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5	Retail sales statistics for January 2019

5	Statistics on vessels, port cargo and containers for fourth quarter 2018
11	Quarterly business receipts indices for service industries for fourth quarter 2018
12	Construction output statistics for fourth quarter 2018
12	Statistics on trade involving outward processing in the mainland of China for fourth quarter 2018
14	Index of industrial production and producer price index for industrial sector for fourth quarter 2018
15	Gross National Income and external primary income flows for fourth quarter 2018
18	Volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade for January 2019
19	Unemployment and underemployment statistics for December 2018 – February 2019
19	Chain volume measures of Gross Domestic Product by economic activity for fourth quarter 2018
21	Consumer Price Index for February 2019
22	Employment and vacancies statistics for December 2018
22	Balance of Payments and International Investment Position statistics for fourth quarter 2018
26	External merchandise trade statistics for February 2019
28	Wage and payroll statistics for December 2018

April 2019

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Date

Press Release

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1	Retail sales statistics for February 2019
16	Volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade for February 2019
18	Unemployment and underemployment statistics for January – March 2019
23	Consumer Price Index for March 2019
26	Business expectations for second quarter 2019
29	External merchandise trade statistics for March 2019

Note: The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the fourth quarter of 2018 and the whole year of 2018 together with other supporting materials will be released

along with the Financial Secretary's "Budget Speech". According to the Financial Secretary's Office, the Budget is scheduled to be delivered on 27 February 2019. No separate press release on the GDP for the fourth quarter of 2018 and the whole year of 2018 will be issued by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) on that day.

The schedule for regular press releases in the other months of 2019 can be downloaded from the website of the Census and Statistics Department (www.censtatd.gov.hk/press_release/index.jsp).

Ombudsman publishes Brief Report 2018

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman, Ms Connie Lau, today (January 31) published the Office of The Ombudsman's Brief Report 2018.

The Office received a total of 10 130 enquiries and 4 870 complaints in 2018. The figures were at similar levels to those in the past few years, with an average of 850 enquiries and 400 complaints per month.

Based on the allegations made by complainants, the top three causes for public complaints against government departments/public organisations were errors and wrong advice/decision (34.2 per cent), ineffective control (13.6 per cent) and delay/inaction (12.6 per cent). The top three causes above were the same as those in 2017, only that the second and third had swapped places.

For complaints received and screened in, the Office will pursue by inquiry, mediation or full investigation, depending on the nature and complexity of the cases. Of the 2 785 cases pursued and concluded, 84.7 per cent were concluded by inquiry, 7.9 per cent by full investigation, and 7.4 per cent by mediation. These figures were similar to those of last year.

In 2018, the Office completed and announced the following 11 direct investigation reports:

- (1) Government's Control over Fly-tipping of Construction Waste and Landfilling Activities on Private Land
- (2) The Mechanism of Food and Health Bureau and Department of Health for Handling Smoking Offences
- (3) Water Supplies Department's Maintenance of Government Water Mains and Risk Management
- (4) Government Departments' Handling of the Problem of Air-conditioner Dripping

- (5) Immigration Department's Mechanism for Following up Cases of Unregistered Birth
- (6) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department's Regulation of Market Stalls
- (7) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department's Rental Management of Market Stalls
- (8) Housing Department's Arrangement for Using Idle Spaces in Public Housing Estates
- (9) Regulation of Illegal Burials Outside Permitted Burial Grounds by the Home Affairs Department and the Lands Department
- (10) Government's Regulation of Proprietary Chinese Medicine
- (11) Social Welfare Department's Monitoring of Services of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly

As always, the Office will publish the direct investigation reports on its website, and select those direct investigation reports of wide community concern for announcement at press conferences. The Office will keep an eye on issues that warrant its attention in order to decide on the direction of investigation.

SWD invites eligible elderly persons to apply for fifth batch of vouchers under Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (January 31) invited eligible elderly persons to apply for the fifth batch of vouchers under the Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher (RCSV) for the Elderly.

A spokesman for the SWD said that elderly persons who have been assessed as moderately impaired under the SWD's Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services and waitlisted for care-and-attention (C&A) places under the Central Waiting List (CWL) for Subsidised Long Term Care Services for the Elderly with application dates on or before the end of August 2018 (not including those who are RCSV holders, those who have utilised RCSVs, those whose status on the CWL is "inactive" or those who are offered subsidised placement) are eligible to apply for the fifth batch of RCSVs. Letters will be sent to the elderly persons concerned to invite them to join the Pilot Scheme. The closing date for applications is February 28.

Successful applicants will be issued with RCSVs from the end of March onwards.

The spokesman said, "Adopting the 'money-following-the-user' principle, the Scheme provides an additional choice for elderly persons in need of residential care service by allowing them to choose the residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), from among the eligible RCHEs under the Pilot Scheme, that suit their needs, the Pilot Scheme has been implemented in three phases which were launched in March 2017, September 2017 and September 2018."

To date, there are a total of 103 RCHEs participating as Recognised Service Providers (RSPs) in different phases offering beds which accept RCSV holders. The RSPs include subvented homes, contract homes and self-financing homes providing non-subsidised residential care places for the elderly as well as private RCHEs which meet the requirements. Such requirements include meeting the space standard and staffing requirements of EA1 homes under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS). The SWD now invites eligible RCHEs to apply for participating in the third phase of the Pilot Scheme as RSPs. It is expected that the numbers of RSPs and residential care places available for RCSV holders would increase gradually.

Under the principle of "users pay in accordance with affordability", the Scheme adopts a sliding scale of co-payment at eight levels (Level 0 to Level 7). Elderly persons will be assessed on an individual basis in the means test in which both income and assets are taken into account in determining the co-payment level. The percentages of payment by elderly users range from 0 per cent at the lowest to 75 per cent at the highest. The current voucher value under the Pilot Scheme is \$13,287 per month. The RSP has to provide a "standard service package" under the voucher value for RCSV holders. The scope of the package is comparable to that of subsidised C&A places under the EBPS. Apart from choosing places at voucher value in RSPs, the Pilot Scheme also allows RCSV holders to make top-up payments to purchase enhanced or value-added services.

The spokesman added that the Residential Care Service Voucher Office of the SWD would provide support for RCSV holders, such as regular visits and assistance in switching RSPs when necessary.

For elderly persons who have received invitation letters or for eligible elderly persons as mentioned above, if they or their carers/family members have enquiries about the application for RCSV, they may contact the above-mentioned office at 3107 3280 or 3107 3290. The telephone lines will be operating from 9.30am to 1pm and from 2.30pm to 5pm on Mondays to Fridays, except for public holidays.

For details of the Pilot Scheme and the list of RSPs, citizens may visit the SWD website (www.swd.gov.hk). Citizens may also browse the SWD Elderly Information Website (elderlyinfo.swd.gov.hk) to get more details such as manpower and facilities about each of the RSPs.