

Man sentenced to 24 months' imprisonment for smuggling eggs of endangered parrot species (with photos)

A Thai man who smuggled 187 eggs of endangered parrot species was convicted at the District Court today (May 16) for violating the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap. 586) and sentenced to imprisonment for 24 months.

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said that the 30-year-old male passenger arrived in Hong Kong on March 1 last year from Thailand. He was intercepted for customs clearance upon arrival at the airport. A total of 188 eggs were found in his carry-on baggage. AFCD officers then arrived at the scene to inspect the eggs. Upon inspection, the eggs were suspected to belong to parrot species listed in the Appendices to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The eggs were subsequently seized for further investigation.

Subsequent to forensics testing, 187 of the eggs were confirmed to be from CITES-listed endangered parrot species, including seven eggs from CITES Appendix I species, namely the Moluccan cockatoo (*Cacatua moluccensis*) and the African grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*), and 180 eggs from CITES Appendix II species, namely the yellow-crowned amazon (*Amazona ochrocephala*), the blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*), the red-and-green macaw (*Ara chloropterus*), the sulfur-breasted parakeet (*Aratinga maculata*), the sun parakeet (*Aratinga solstitialis*), the white cockatoo (*Cacatua alba*), the sulphur-crested cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*), the red-tailed black cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus banksii*), the eclectus parrot (*Eclectus roratus*), the yellow-bibbed lory (*Lorius chlorocercus*) and the red-bellied macaw (*Orthopsittaca manilata*). The value of the seizure was estimated at \$1.4 million.

The man was charged with illegal import of endangered species and was convicted today at the District Court. He was sentenced to 24 months in prison.

Parrot populations have been decimated by illegal trade, which incentivises poaching in the wild worldwide. With the exception of four species, all parrots have been listed on the CITES Appendices. In Hong Kong, their international trade and local possession are regulated under the Ordinance. Any person importing, exporting or possessing specimens of endangered species not in accordance with the Ordinance commits an offence and will be liable to a maximum fine of HK\$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years upon conviction with the specimens forfeited.

For information on the regulation of endangered species under the Ordinance, please visit www.cites.hk. To report any suspected irregularities, members of the public can call the AFCD by 1823.

