

# 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](http://www.cites.hk).

