

Man sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment for illegal import of endangered shark fins (with photo)

A man was convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for 12 months at the District Court today (July 24) for illegally importing fins of endangered sharks.

The 36-year-old male passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Brazil via Ethiopia on November 24 last year. Upon interception and referral by Customs, officers of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) inspected his 15 pieces of checked-in baggage and found dried fins regulated under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap. 586). The person did not possess any valid Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) documents. AFCD officers seized over 450 kilograms of dried fins from the baggage for further investigation. Upon detailed examination, those dried fins were confirmed to belong to several species, among which about 113 kilograms were from silky sharks and hammerhead sharks, which are CITES Appendix II species and valued at about \$620,000. Charges were laid against the man by the AFCD for the illegal import of endangered species. The man was convicted at the District Court today and the court adopted a starting point of 18 months' imprisonment for sentencing. A one-third reduction was given for his guilty plea and the defendant was sentenced to imprisonment for 12 months.

A spokesman for the AFCD said, "The rest of the seized fins also consisted of CITES-listed species. However, those species were not yet regulated under CITES or the Ordinance at the time. Given that the criminal act also involved such fins, the AFCD applied to the Court to forfeit those fins in accordance with the Ordinance. The application was approved."

CITES Appendix II species are regulated under the Ordinance in Hong Kong. Unless exempted or otherwise specified, the import, export, re-export, introduction from the sea, or possession of scheduled species, including their parts and/or derivatives, is subject to control under a licensing system. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years upon conviction with the specimens forfeited.

The spokesman noted that more shark species have been regulated under the Ordinance since December last year to reflect the latest regulations of CITES. Members of the public are reminded to observe the law.

Recently, crime syndicates have not only attempted to use invalid documents, but have also sourced specimens that were not regulated and mixed them with scheduled ones in an effort to make detection more difficult. The AFCD will continue to work closely with Customs to combat illegal activities involving endangered species.

For information on the regulation of endangered species under the Ordinance, visit www.cites.hk. Members of the public may report any suspected irregularities to the AFCD by calling 1823.



[Appointments to Transport Advisory Committee](#)

â€‹The Government announced today (July 24) that the Chief Executive has reappointed Professor Stephen Cheung Yan-leung as Chairman of the Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) and five incumbent members, as well as appointing two new members to the TAC. The reappointments and appointments are for a term of two years with effect from October 1 this year.

The serving members to be reappointed are Mr Joel Chan Cho-sing, Ms Cally Chan Shan-shan, Mr Hugh Chow Hin-poon, Dr Isaac Ng Ka-chui and Ms Iris Wan Lai-sze. The two new members are Miss Chan Hong-yee and Ms Dilys Chau Suet-fung.

The Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, said, "Under the remarkable leadership of Professor Cheung, the TAC has tendered valuable advice on many significant transport issues over the past years. The Government looks forward to continuing to work closely with Professor Cheung and the TAC members in the future.

"We also thank the two outgoing members, Mr Hugh Tong Chun-wai and Mr Wilson Tam Wai-shun, for their contributions to the TAC over the past years."

The TAC is a key advisory body to the Government on broad issues of transport policy and major transport-related proposals. Currently, the TAC comprises 16 non-official members including the Chairman and three ex-officio members. Its membership and terms of reference are available at www.tlb.gov.hk/eng/boards/transport/land/tac.html.

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on July 23 to noon today (July 24), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 236 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan"

(www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 70 445 samples of food imported from Japan (including 45 278 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 16 644 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Suspicious websites and internet banking login screens related to Mox Bank Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Mox Bank Limited relating to suspicious websites and internet banking login screens, which have been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive personal information, such as login passwords or one-time password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the websites or login screens concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

Phishing instant messages related to Fubon Bank (Hong Kong) Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Fubon Bank (Hong Kong) Limited relating to phishing instant messages, which have been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive personal information, such as login passwords or One-Time Password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the instant messages concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.